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A BUYER'S GUIDE TO FANZINES OR HOW NOT TO DROP \$200.00 IN A HURRY

Susan M. Garrett

More people buy zines than produce them, but it still seems like there's an ever growing number of new fanzines just looking for readers. Limited access to conventions could decrease the numbers of fanzines you purchase, but for the wonders of mail order. Despite the differences in technology, reproduction, and style of presentation, there are some consistent guidelines to help you know whether or not you're getting your money's worth.

How do I know I'll like what I'm getting?

If you're at a convention, it's relatively easy to pick up a zine, flip through it, and decide whether or not the zine is worth the purchase price. It all depends on what's important to you, but there's nothing that can quite compare with the first impression of an eye-catching cover, trustworthy binding, and clear, readable print. A quick read through of a paragraph or two should give you some idea of the quality of the writing. Obviously, the "hands on" approach is the best. There's nothing that says you *have* to purchase your zines at conventions, but mail order charges can add anywhere from \$1.00 to \$4.00 to the price of a zine.

If you're miles from any conventions that carry zines

and you do most of your zine buying by mail, you'll often purchase something without ever having seen it before. There are a few ways to help you in your decision as to what may, or may not, be a good buy:

— *Flyers*. It's said that many zine editors lavish more care on their flyers than they do on the zine itself. This may or may not be true, but a well presented flyer could be an indication that you're dealing with someone who can put together a worthwhile package. Conversely, some editors put out a flyer rather quickly and haphazardly when a zine has been completed, so that eighteen months of zine work doesn't show up in the "we're here" piece of paper stuffed awkwardly into your SASE. In any case, a flyer can give you an idea of content, page count, and perhaps layout of the product. (Note — From limited market research, flyers are generally used more often for orders by repeat customers, rather than new readers. We don't know why, we just know that's the way it is.)

— *Editor*. If you know of the editor and the quality of his or her previous work, you can get a better than average idea of what a new product may look like. Take into account that most people learn from their mistakes (I've yet to see a fanzine where the second issue didn't improve

markedly over the first), and that one can't always count on the appearances of first issues.

— *Contributors.* If you like someone's writing or artwork, make an effort to remember their name. Jot it down on a spare notebook or cardfile, if you'd like. The final quality of a submission always depends upon the editor ... but there has to be something there to begin with. A flyer is a very good place to pick up a few names that might sound familiar.

— *Previous issues.* This follows more or less along the lines of knowing an editor. The problem with dealing with someone on a one to one basis is that their failings may lie in different areas — it's perfectly possible for an editor to put out a terrific zine but be unable to answer correspondence promptly or to put out a decent flyer. That's why checking out previous issues could be very important.

— *Reviews.* Many trade zines and letterzines will publish reviews of zines. A review, properly done, should give you a run-down on the contents, the high points, and the failings of a zine. The main questions that every zine review should answer are: "Is it worth the money?" and "Why is or isn't it worth the money?" If someone's willing to say they made a good buy, maybe the zine is worth your money, too.

— *Memory.* If you go to even one con and see a zine that you like but that you don't have the cash for, pick up a flyer and make a note of it. Don't trust your memory — write it down.

How do I know I'm getting my money's worth?

The price an editor charges for a zine can depend on a number of factors, including difference in style of cover (color v. offset v. photocopy, etc.), choice of reproduction (photocopy, offset, laser print, mimeo, etc.), type of binding (staple, spiral, perfect, etc.), and page count. Page count is usually determined by the quantity of submissions and modified by the size of print — a fifty page 10-pitch zine will contain less material than a fifty page 15-pitch zine, but don't be surprised if they cost the same! Also take into account that a greater number of contributors means a larger number of contributors' copies that must be produced, which increases the per issue cost of the zine.

Larger zines or fancier zines cost more, there's just no way around it. The difficulty lies in knowing that a poorly reproduced and stapled zine might contain better fiction than a laser printed, perfect bound extravaganza ... or vice versa. The presentation, not the content, is what's going to cost you in the long run.

Here's a fast way to figure out the cost of a zine — multiply the number of pages (2 pages are usually 1 double sided piece of paper) by six or seven cents, then make

certain adjustments for style (color or speciality covers, printing or binding). If the zine is way over the mark, double check your figures and take another look at the page count. Understand that a color cover can cost as much as \$2.00 or \$3.00 per issue, binding can run from 30¢ for staples to \$2.50 for perfect binding per issue, and local photocopy costs may range from two cents to eleven cents per page. The six or seven cents per page range usually takes into account a number of binding and style options and still gets you a good price. If you feel that a zine is overpriced, let the editor know — in a nice way. They only sell zines if people are willing to buy them and someone coming into a market for the first time may not necessarily know what the market price should be.

What about mailing costs?

Mailing costs can add a bundle to a zine, especially one from overseas. If you order by mail, you might want to inquire as to how the zine will be shipped. For example:

Priority. First class mail sent within the continental U.S. that over two pounds. Usually arrives within a week, generally within two to three days of mailing.

1st. Usually indicates 1st class U.S. mail, which is also called Parcel Post. This usually arrives within two weeks mailed anywhere within the continental U.S.

Book Rate. Also known as 4th Class Parcel Post-Book Rate. This is a special rate for bound booklets or books. This can take from a month to two months when sent within the continental U.S. but it is a lot cheaper than 1st class if the item is two pounds or over.

Book Rate/Special Handling. The Special Handling makes all the difference, combining the low cost of book rate with the speed of 1st class — usually a two week delivery within the continental U.S. You should be warned, however, that some Post Offices confuse this service with book rate and will treat it as such — leading to a very long delivery time.

UPS. United Parcel Service. This varies throughout the country. UPS is a private delivery service (the people with the ugly brown trucks) who deliver in three days in most of the country, but who take 2 to 3 weeks to deliver to parts of southern New Jersey (*Ed: Or whatever part of the country YOU happen to live in!*). The cost is equivalent to U.S. Mail, maybe a little less than 1st class, but the packages are handled less and arrive in better condition. Also — *UPS will not deliver to a Post Office (P.O.) Box!*

Airmail. This should be used only Overseas and only if you're in a real hurry because it costs a LOT of money (more depending on the country of origin). However, Airmail can run anywhere from two to four weeks, which isn't bad for Overseas.

Seamail. Again, this is an Overseas service. Cheaper

than Airmail, it also takes longer, anywhere from a month to six months to arrive. Your package is also usually battered, bashed, and beaten to a pulp.

If you mail Federal Express or Overnight Express, etc., you're bound to pay some heavy fees, but you can also get 24 hour or 48 hour delivery. You get what you pay for in that circumstance.

Why are zines more expensive than professional books?

Zines are limited productions with unlimited costs. For example, an editor might have to pay for reproduction, binding, covers, production incidentals (which can run from a few \$12.99 typewriter ribbons to a \$60.00 drum of laser printer toner or mimeo machine repair), contributors' copies (which include mailing costs), return of artwork and originals, mailing costs for zine correspondence, flyer reproduction and setup, etc. Not to mention the cost of actually selling the zines, which includes advertising (subscriptions to trade zines or advertising in professional zines), dealers' tables, shipping, and a whole lot of other nasty little financial surprises. All this for 100 copies?

Professional print runs are usually around 10,000 copies, permitting a wider spreading of costs. Whereas publishing companies have huge bank accounts to handle these transactions, editors often rely on their own personal finances, putting up the preliminary cash from their own money, never knowing if they'll be able to sell their zines to get their money back.

Should I buy bootleg zines if I come across them?

Certainly not! A bootleg zine is an unauthorized reproduction of a fanzine, where the original editor and contributors have no control of the reproduction, changes in content, and never see a dime of the proceeds. Most zines have a copyright statement indicating that to copy the zine without permission will be considered theft. Bootleg zines are often cheaply reproduced copies that are sold by unscrupulous people without the editor's knowledge. Because the contributors do not receive copies and the cost to the bootlegger is often no more than the cheapest reproduction they can find, you might think that bootleg zines are a good, cheap way to fill out your collection — actually, bootleggers tend to get greedy and will most times charge more than the original zine would cost!

Bootlegging also increases the cost of regular zines — editors have to take greater precautions to insure that their zines aren't bootlegged. The only person who makes out well is the bootlegger, who makes a quick buck by adding to the air of distrust in fandom. Editors have to charge more for their zines, or quit entirely, readers have to pay more for

their zines, and contributors see their carefully tended submissions re-edited or reproduced in an ugly or haphazard fashion.

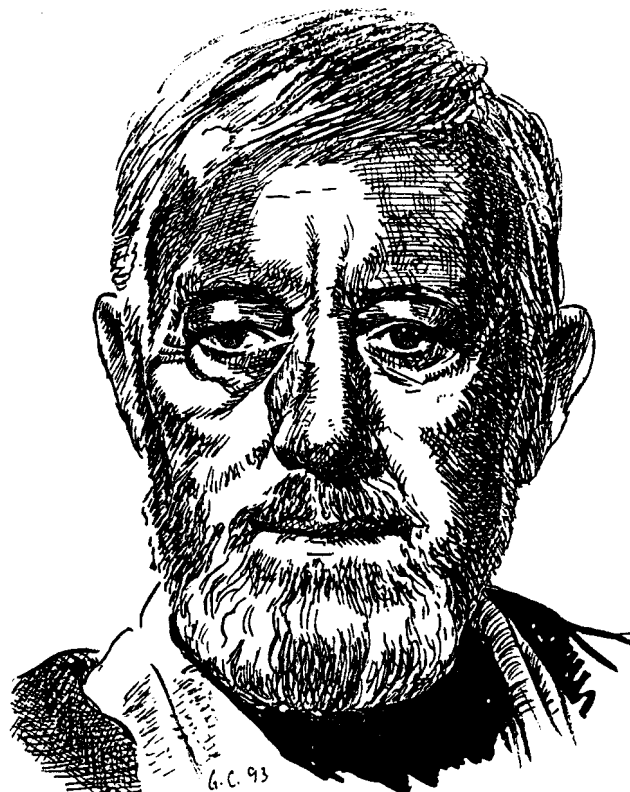
What should I do if I suspect a zine I've purchased is bootleg or that someone is dealing in bootlegs?

If you're at a convention, contact whoever is in charge of the dealers' room or grab any member of the convention committee. Most conventions will have some method of dealing with bootleggers in their bylaws, the punishments ranging from confiscation of goods to expulsion from the convention. If you purchase a bootleg copy of a zine through the mail, drop a line to the original publisher (you can usually still find their name and address on the title page — bootleggers don't seem to be half as bright as they are greedy) and let them know what you suspect.

Remember, bootlegging hurts everyone. You don't have to do anymore than notify someone involved of your suspicions — that will be more than enough.

Conclusion

Whether or not a zine is worth the money depends on three criteria — the content, the presentation, and the price. As the price is pretty easy to judge across the board and is usually reflected in the presentation, the real determination of whether or not the zine is worth your money will depend on how much you want to read it, and you can determine that easily enough by using trade zines, reviews, flyers, and correspondence.



Star Wars as Fairy Tale

Lisa Cowan

In most cultures there is no clear line separating myth from folk or fairy tale. The Nordic languages have only one word for both: *saga*. The German culture has retained the word *Saga* or *Sage* for myths, and *Märchen* for fairy tales or hero tales — the difference is mainly in length rather than content.

It is unfortunate that the English and French call these tales “fairy tales”, for in most cases there are no fairies. “*Märchen*” is the term I will be using to describe the fairy tale or the hero tale.

Märchen themes center on man’s fascination with supernatural adventures. They tell about ordinary man’s encounters with the superhuman world, and how he is changed by the experience. That pretty much describes the *Star Wars* saga.

The beginning of a *Märchen* often stresses an accumulation of absurdities rather than plot development. *SW* begins this way, with event after event happening to the droids. Then we meet Luke, and with the introduction of the hero, the plot gets underway, for a *Märchen* is the story of a hero.

It is also the story of winning out over all competitors, seeing the destruction of enemies, and the fulfillment of wishes. The story appeals to both our conscious and unconscious minds, for *Märchen* is poetry. It expresses escape from reality, as opposed to myth and legend which face the facts of reality. “A long time ago in a galaxy far far away” clearly labels the *SW* trilogy as a fairy tale or *Märchen*.

The mythical *Märchen*-universe presents an atmosphere of the age of feudalism. It is a world of heroic virtues in which people acquire power by their good swords (or light sabers). Petty monarchs rule the world. The “king” lives in luxury, but he “hires the swineherd himself, and counts the pigs daily” (in the words of Richard M. Dorson, in *Folktales and Folklife*).

The Emperor himself supervises the Death Star. He plans events: “It is I who allowed the Alliance to learn the location of the shield generator.” Relationships between master and servant are as patriarchal as in feudal courts.

Polarization dominates fairy tales. A person is either

good or bad, black or white. The color schemes of the clothing worn by the lead characters in *SW* reflect this, although by the third film they have been transposed, and blend a bit.

Repetition is also important to fairy tales and myths. We see a lot of repetition in *SW*. There is repeating dialogue and two Death Stars. The heroes get captured and escape four times — on the Death Star, on Bespin, at Jabba’s Palace and the Sand Barge, and on Endor.

Meshed within the *Märchen* of *SW* is the romantic tale. Here the composition is much the same, but the fantastic plays a lesser role. Here the hero and heroine tend to be simple people with simple goals. They don’t push their luck beyond their human limitations. There is more emphasis on the qualities of cleverness, wit, wisdom, trickery, endurance, and patience than on heroism. These qualities are found in all the main characters of the *SW* saga, but especially in Han and Leia.

The *SW* saga is not just a romantic fairy tale, however. It also has many mythical elements within it. George Lucas has managed to blend *Märchen* and mythic elements together in a truly delightful way.

A myth, like a fairy tale, often expresses an inner conflict in symbolic form, and goes on to suggest how it is solved. The myth presents itself in a majestic way; it carries spiritual force. The divine is present and is experienced in the form of superhuman heroes and helpers, who make constant demands on mere mortals. Try as he may, the hero of a myth can rarely live up to what “the gods” — in this case, Yoda and Ben — seem to require of him. “You ask the impossible,” says Luke to Yoda.

Far from making demands, the fairy tale reassures, gives hope for the future, and holds the promise of the happy ending. Myths often end tragically. The hero and the trials he undergoes are often removed from the common man — and make him hard to emulate or identify with. Han Solo is easier to relate to than Luke as the saga develops.

Events in a fairy tale, even though unusual or improbable, are presented as ordinary, not grandiose. Even the most remarkable encounters are related in casual, everyday ways. This may explain why *SW*’s special effects

²Reprinted from *Mythcon* with permission. At Mythcon XIV, held at Scripps College in 1983, one of the featured program items was a panel titled “Return of the Myths: Tracing the Mythic Structures in the *Star Wars* Saga,” led and moderated by Lisa Cowan. This is the first in a 5-part series based on that panel.

blend in so well with the story. They are presented in a casual manner within the context of the plot. They help move the story forward, rather than bringing it to a halt while the audience admires the fancy effect. The story line

of the SW saga flows smoothly from beginning to end. It is a very familiar tale, centuries old, but one we dearly want to hear again and again.

An Interview With Mark Hamill

Transcribed by Chris Graham

Mark Hamill was interviewed on *KTLA Morning News* in Santa Ana, CA on September 23, 1996. The reporters were Carlos Amezcua and Barbara Beck:

- CA: All right, we remember him best on the big screen with names like Skywalker and hanging out with robots and space aliens.
- BB: So it only seems natural for our next guest to move into making comic strips. He's just released the first issue in a series of five graphic novels. He joins us now to tell us all about the *Black Pearl*. Good morning, Mark Hamill. Welcome.
- MH: Good morning. Thank you very much.
- CA: (Holding up BP) Very interesting. Very edgy. How did this all happen?
- MH: I had this idea for many years and I'd always wanted to write something that I could call my own, and I pitched it to my cousin, Eric Johnson, who's a writer already and he said "That is good. We really ought to do it." We wrote a script for a screenplay, and Dark Horse Comics read it and wanted to turn it into a comic book, which is unusual because the whole idea is why there cannot be a Batman in the real world. I mean, I just imagine turning on KTLA and hearing a news item about guy in a costume fighting crime; they would be after him with butterfly nets.
- BB: Ah, so this sort of explains that. Because we're all saying, "Why isn't there a Batman? Where is Batman?" This explains why this can't happen.
- MH: Yeah, well, I look back on comic books I read as a kid and that I thought seemed to be almost realistic, and it's just absurd. It's an absurd notion, so for it to be a comic book is kind of ironic to us, but we wanted to do a sort of demented, edgy thriller for the 90's — be entertaining but have something on its mind and it's about the tabloidization of our society. I mean, *Hard Copy*

and *Inside Edition* would be all over this story like a cheap suit. It's about responsibility in journalism, and I think — there's five issues, and if we stick with it, the storyline changes, the characters deepen, you realize the guy is not so much crusading for justice, but it's a story of obsessed love. So it's much more like a Gothic romance, along the lines of *Phantom of the Opera*.

- BB: Wow, you get a lot in this little thing, don't ya?
- CA: This is Luther Drake you're talking about?
- MH: Luther Drake, right.
- BB: I don't want to downplay the action in it; I mean, it's an action comic. It's not...
- MH: It's also a graphic novel; it's not for young kids, so don't send me angry letters. The reason we call it a graphic novel is it has mature themes. I met Carlos' son; I don't think I'd want to take responsibility for him paging through it. I've got three kids of my own; I don't think there's anything in it that would corrupt anyone. It would probably be PG-13 or a soft R if it were a film.
- BB: So you're not calling it an adult comic series; you're calling it graphic.
- MH: No, and I mean, what's adult? Am I an adult? I mean, it's pathetic. Look at me.
- CA: Yes, you are an adult.
- MH: I am? My life is a comic book. What can I say?
- CA: (Pointing to comic panel of newscaster) I notice you have Barbara here. This is a good shot of her. She's a little blonde, but she plays in all the movies, so it's only appropriate that you would cast her in the film.
- MH: We'd love to have a "bite" of her if we do a film, because what we want to do is never have people once roll their eyes and say, "oh, brother". We want people to look at this and think, "*The Black Pearl*. You know, that could happen."

BB: So, this is going to be made into a film?

MH: Well, if I have anything to say about it, it will be. I'm keeping my fingers crossed and I'm cautiously optimistic. I know this isn't hard data, but I know my friends in Manhattan called and said, "We went to the comic book store and it's sold out." It sold out at two stores in the Valley, so either they undershipped or we've got a hit on our hands. I hope it's the latter.

BB: And if you want to, not only I guess get a copy, and meet Mark Hamill, and get *The Black Pearl* signed, you can go to Hi De Ho Comics in Santa Monica. It's Saturday the 28th. That's this Saturday, from 1 to 3.

MH: I hope they come out and see me. This is actually my comic book store where I really shop, so I mean, they could probably see me just shopping, but this Saturday, I'll be there to sign copies and meet people, and I'm real excited about it, really excited about it.

CA: You've teamed up with some really good artists. I mean, look at this.

MH: H. M. Baker is the artist. He did a series called *Ghost*. He's got a really fluid style. Interestingly enough, he lives in Bosnia-Herzegovina. So we were communicating — I drew, in my own crude fashion, every single page of this comic, and I

would xerox it, send it to him. And I thought, "You know, we're dealing with this goofy, loopy story, and here's a man whose life is far more dramatic than we can ever imagine, when you're every day living under that kind of oppression."

BB: Talk about adding an edge to it.

MH: Absolutely, absolutely.

BB: Very nice to see you.

MH: Thank you for having me.

BB: So you can get it, if you can't find a copy of *The Black Pearl*, will they be able to get a copy at Hi De Ho on Saturday?

MH: Absolutely. At Hi De Ho Comics this Saturday in Santa Monica, at Santa Monica and 6th. And it's only 3 bucks, I mean, what would it kill you? Buy two, they make great stocking stuffers!

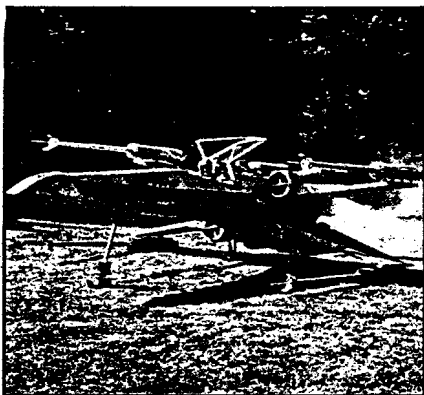
BB: Mark Hamill, you make a great marketer.

MH: Am I shameless hawking—

CA: No, no, this is good. I want to quickly ask you now, any more *Star Wars* things in the future?

MH: You bet. They're getting ready to do the initial trilogy. Takes place 30 years earlier, so my role will be to line up, buy my popcorn, and watch the show.

BB: Nice to see you, Mark Hamill.



May the Force (and the wallet) be with you: This item from *Star Wars* is in the new Neiman Marcus catalog

The Perfect Yuletide Gift

If you're a *Star Wars* fan who'll have a few bucks to burn this Christmas, Neiman Marcus has some gift ideas for you:

- A life-sized replica of Darth Vader, complete with body armor and cape. The asking price is \$5000.
- The only replica of an X-Wing Fighter from *Star Wars* that's for sale. (Just a small number were produced, and the others still belong to 20th Century-Fox. Several were displayed in Europe to promote *Star Wars* when it was rereleased on video last year.) This replica will go to the highest bidder in a mail auction.

Bids must exceed \$35,000. Any amount over that figure will go to the Starbright Foundation, which helps children with serious medical challenges. The foundation's chairman is the director Steven Spielberg, who certainly could afford that X-Wing Fighter.

CHARACTER BIOGRAPHY

Compiled by Judith Yuenger
from the SW Screen Saver by LucasArts
(Two or three of these biographies will be printed in every issue)

C-3PO & R2-D2

SEX: Does not apply
RACE: Does not apply
HEIGHT: 1.8 and 1 meter respectively

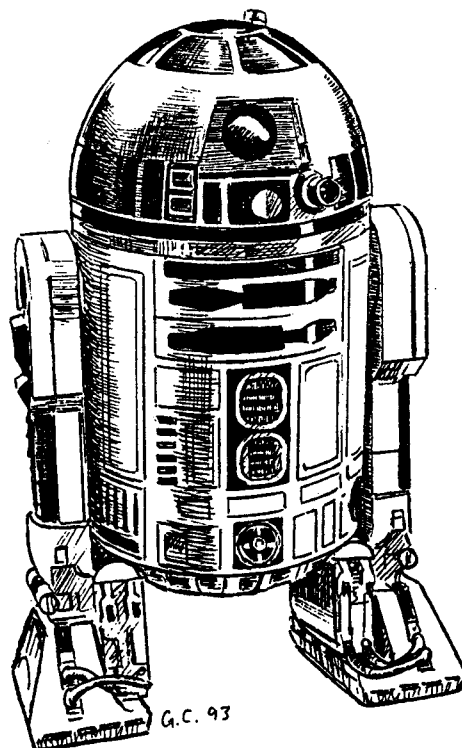
After over 100 years in function, C-3PO has spent the last several decades in faithful service to the Senate. Through several reassignments, the droid has worked under some of the most influential political figures in the galaxy. During this time, it became acquainted with the astromech droid, R2-D2. The two shared base programming stemming from similar code and became close "friends". They didn't serve together very often, although they did find themselves assigned to the same ship or station on several occasions. Even then, R2 spent most of its time in mechanical subprogramming hangers while 3PO translated for the many species on the Senate floor. As it was fluent in over six million languages, it was loaned to many ambassadors many times.

It was their fateful trip on the *Tantive VI* that truly brought them together. While 3PO was being transported to its newest master, Captain Antilles, R2 was being programmed to seek out Obi Wan Kenobi and deliver the secret plans stored in its memory. The astromech droid was to be jettisoned to Tatooine alone in search of the Jedi Knight. Unfortunately, the *Tantive VI* was overtaken by a Star Destroyer minutes before the droid was to leave. There was enough time for Princess Leia to record a final plea before sending it off. What was not in the plan was to have 3PO tagging along, bailing with R2 to escape being melted down by the Empire.

Very soon after landing, the two were captured by Jawas and sold on auction. Fortunately for both of them, they were purchased by Owen Lars and placed in the care of Luke Skywalker. They couldn't have asked for a better guardian. R2 didn't recognize Luke for who he was and had no way of knowing the role Luke would eventually play in the Battle of Yavin. It continued to seek out Obi-Wan on its own, prompting Luke to go after it, and eventually, student and master Jedi were introduced.

The droids have remained with Luke ever since and their

skills are put to use for the Alliance on a daily basis. Threepio's protocol and linguistic talents are used to monitor Imperial security bands and translate intercepted codes, while Artoo's mechanical programming skills are put to use in the rear pod of Luke's X-wing. The two are "spiritually" inseparable, despite their constant bickering, and when separated for long periods, actually begin to "miss" each other.



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SINCEREST SYMPATHY TO...

Debbie Kittle on the passing of her grandmother in September.

A. G. Steyn on her father's death in March.

Annie Wortham on her mother's passing in October.

Veronica Wilson on the loss of her mother in October.

And all those who have lost beloved pets this year, particularly *Judith Yuenger* and her horse, Rusty.

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Thanks to Barbara Anderson, Tim Blaes, Debbie Kittle, Maggie Nowakowska, Louise Turner, and everyone else who sent clippings. We wish we could publish them all!

The Force is About to Be With Us Again Soon!

Things are beginning to heat up faster than a Bantha in a Tatooine summer! By the time the next issue of SE rolls off the ol' copy machine, *Star Wars Special Edition* will be on the big screen again and probably TESB as well! As you will see from an article later in this issue, the Trilogy is due to be re-released within weeks of each other between January 21 and March 7, 1997. So, start saving your money, mark your calendars, and get ready to stand in line for the big event! If you have Next Generation fans, take 'em with you! I'm planning to be there with Katy so she can feel the thrill of roaring down a Death Star trench, zipping across Hoth snowfields in a speeder, and whipping through Endor forests the way they were meant to be seen.

And the Big Event is also underway. Casting has begun on the Prequel Trilogy. When we'll see these movies, though, remains to be seen. By the Turn of the Century? Hopefully before that. Well, as we used to say in the Olden Days — "May you live long enough to see Chapter 9!"

Get your hand on your pocketbook, though, because marketing is about to go to lightspeed. Besides all the things there are out there right now, you'll also be bombarded by promotions from Pizza Hut, Taco Bell, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Frito-Lay, and no doubt any other entity that can possibly make a buck. Be judicious. Buying junk will only encourage more marketing of junk. But, boy, is it going to be fun!

On to more serious topics, there have been a number of deaths in the SW fan community. We express our most sincere condolences to those who have lost parents and grandparents in recent months. Having gone through it myself last year, I understand your grief and anguish and lift

you up in my prayers for strength and comfort.

And not to belittle in any way those who are grieving for human loved ones, we also offer sympathy to those who have lost four-legged loved ones this past year as well. In August, we had the sad duty of putting to sleep our old German Shepherd, Cruiser. Officially, he was Kasselglen's Crusader, a dog with outstanding pedigree (his great-grandfather was Am. and Can. Grand Victor Ch. Lance of Fran-Jo, one of the most honored German Shepherds in recent history, and there were many champions in his family). Cruiser, though, was merely a companion dog — gentle, loving, good natured and beautiful to look at. He was with us for over 11 years and in the end had become blind, deaf and unsteady with old age.

Because we didn't want our other dog, Wolf, to suffer the loss of a close companion, we have recently brought home a new puppy. She is a 12 week old sable German Shepherd named Honi Aus Der Amburg. Honi (or Princess, as Katy calls her) moved right in and took over. She is a bundle of fire. We thought about calling her "Leia" because she was so assertive and take charge, but decided against it. We just couldn't picture a "Leia" with one ear up and the other flopped over and a goofy look on her face. This stage shouldn't last long, though, and Honi should indeed become a regal princess by the time she's a year old.

May this issue find you all in good health, and getting ready to celebrate the holiday season. Best wishes for a Thanksgiving which finds you with much to be thankful for, and Hanukkah, Christmas, or whatever you celebrate full of the warmth of family and friends, good food and good cheer.

May the Force be with us all in 1997!

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Deadline for #47 — February 1, 1997. Submissions received later than seven (7) days after deadline will not be published in the current issue.

This article was supplied by Laura Virgil from the Internet:

STAR WARS TO BE RE-RELEASED IN JANUARY 1997

by Andrew Hindes

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. (Nov. 11) — Name that year: The Beatles are No. 1 on the album charts, hip huggers are hip, and a film called *Star Wars* is coming soon to a theater near you.

If you guessed 1996, you're right.

In January, 20th Century Fox will begin rolling out *Star Wars Special Edition*, an updated version of the groundbreaking sci-fi trilogy.

But this is more than a trip down memory lane for Fox: with a full-court publicity blowout, unprecedented promotional tie-ins and a wide release of between 1,850 and 2,000 prints, Fox is gambling that the 20-year-old film and its two sequels, all readily available on video, can still pack 'em in.

The studio is convinced that a new generation of kids — and their parents — will pay to see battling x-wings, R2D2 and the Death Star on the big screen.

Special Edition has an added significance for Fox: the release is something of an audition for the studio that hopes to win rights to distribute George Lucas' next *Star Wars* trilogy, currently in development.

Of course, these aren't just any films. Released on 26 screens in 1977, *Star Wars* went on to take in \$323 million, becoming for a time the highest grossing movie ever. The sequels, *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *Return of the Jedi* (1983), which will both be re-released within five weeks of *Star Wars*, earned \$223 million and \$264 million, respectively.

Already, box office expectations for Special Edition are flying high. Movie theater executives and even rival studios estimate *Star Wars* could gross anywhere from \$25 million to \$50 million or more, with the sequels each taking in about half as much.

While the *Star Wars* franchise is in many ways a special case, a big success might persuade other studios to take a similarly grand approach to unearthing their own popcorn hits from the 70's and 80's.

Fox and Lucas have poured more than \$10 million into restoring and modernizing the first *Star Wars*. In addition to refurbishing a badly deteriorated negative, director Lucas has added new scenes, updated about 250 visual effects and created a digital soundtrack.

The cost of upgrading the two sequels, which reportedly were in better condition because of more stable film stock

used, came to about \$2.5 million each.

Fox will probably spend a relatively modest \$40-50 million marketing these releases. "The beauty of marketing *Star Wars* is that everybody knows the story," said Tom Sherak, senior executive VP of Fox Filmed Entertainment. "All you have to do is let them know it's coming. It's not about selling a movie."

Nonetheless, PepsiCo has signed on for a gigantic promotional push for Special Edition. In addition to Pepsi-Cola, the company's three major restaurant chains — Pizza Hut, Taco Bell, and Kentucky Fried Chicken — as well as its Frito-Lay snack food unit are all on board.

The rapid-fire succession of the release schedule is also unusual: three weeks after *Star Wars* takes off on Jan. 31, *The Empire Strikes Back* hits the theaters on Feb. 21, followed two weeks later by *Return of the Jedi* on March 7. That means that if the first two films do good business, all three pictures could be on screen simultaneously, perhaps even in the same multiplex.

"It's all one story," Sherak said. "That's the way they were originally intended to be."

Don't expect to see *Star Wars* stars Carrie Fisher or Mark Hamill making the rounds of the talk shows anytime soon. Lucas spokeswoman Lynn Hale said the original cast has not been invited to participate in plugging the release. "It's not something we would ask them to do. It's a situation where the whole is bigger than the parts."

And then there's the video issue. Not only have the *Star Wars* pictures been available on cassette for years, but last year Fox sold 22 million units of a special boxed set of the trilogy.

While having the tape at home might make some families think twice about shelling out at the box office, Fox is betting that the video has introduced a whole new generation to Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia, and that their parents will want their kids to enjoy the theatrical experience they remember.

The video angle doesn't seem to bother movie theater executives, who are naturally bullish on the reissue. "Years ago, the position would have been, 'I'm not paying anything after cable or after video.' But this is a unique experiment," said Richie Faye, present of AMC's marketing department.

In fact, the release puts the whole concept of the modern multiplex to the ultimate test: will audiences pay for the technical niceties of digital sound and a big screen

environment to see something they could see at home?

Examples of hit reissues in the era of video do exist: for instance, Disney's 1991 relaunch of the 1961 animated feature *101 Dalmatians* grossed \$60.8 million.

And while Fox is quiet on the subject, there's always the possibility of another round of ancillary releases — including video and digital videodisc — following Special Edition's theatrical run.

Star Wars, which will go out in all three major digital formats, will play only on digital screens in markets that have them. But the films will play analog in markets that don't have digital screens. About 7,000 of the nation's 28,000 screens have digital capabilities.

In areas where a number of theaters with digital capabilities exist, Fox is making an effort to divide the three films among competing exhibitors. That means *Star Wars* could conceivably be playing across the street from *The Empire Strikes Back* or *Return of the Jedi* in some towns.

The buzz is already building. Audience reaction to a one-

week test run of the Special Edition trailer was overwhelming. One theater reported a standing ovation, while another asked Fox if it could keep the trailer because patrons were coming back specifically to see it.

General audiences will get their first glimpse of the trailer — which plays up the advantages of seeing *Star Wars* on the big screen as opposed to video — beginning on Nov. 22. After that, standees of *Star Wars* characters will begin to invade theater lobbies.

Another promising sign is the activity among *Star Wars* fans online. One person videotaped the trailer and converted it into a downloadable Quicktime movie — much to the dismay of the Fox legal department. Others sites offer Web surfers a text play-by-play of the trailer.

If the *Star Wars* 20th anniversary edition does the kind of business the industry expects, come the year 2002, it's a safe bet a film called *E.T. The Extraterrestrial* will be coming to a theater near you.

George Lucas's company who are making the movies allayed fears through Inverness-based Highland Council.

Producers

Bryan Beattie, of the council's cultural committee, said: "The description should have been translated from California-speak."

Producers are also looking for a boy star.

Auditions are among hundreds being held worldwide for the second set of the three science-fiction family films.

Fury over ad for sensual film girl, 13

By RAY NOTARANGELO

AN advert by Hollywood moguls to find a Scots child star has sparked fury.

For they said they were looking for a "sensual and exotic" 13-year-old girl.

And it sparked Douglas Turner of the Children First charity yesterday to say: "The description conjures up a whole series of disturbing images."

A ChildLine spokesman said: "The word sensual is definitely questionable."

The auditions ad was on leaflets which appeared in Invergordon, Easter Ross.

Film bosses have been forced by the row to say sorry — and reveal they are making nothing more sinister than a new series of *Star Wars* movies.



"If they DO have wars, they're awful quiet about it, JOEY."

WANTED
Young Actor & Actress
for HOLLYWOOD FEATURE FILM

One young Caucasian boy (8 - 9 years old) heartbreakingly handsome and charismatic for leading role.
One beautiful, sensual, exotic girl, Caucasian, Latina or Eurasian (13 - 15 years old) for leading role.

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY
Only appropriate ages should attend.
Bring a photo (non returnable)

WEDNESDAY 8th May 3pm - 7pm
INVERGORDON ARTS CENTRE
High Street, Invergordon

CLAPPER CLANGER ... the ad

Jon Bradley Snyder of *Star Wars Insider*

Cult of the Force

BY WM. STEVEN HUMPHREY

Jon Bradley Snyder is the editor of *Star Wars Insider*, the largest quarterly magazine devoted to the inhabitants of the *Star Wars* Universe. Here, Jon gives us his take on the cult of *Star Wars* and the new movies debuting in '99,

or fluff pieces on new products, I'd rather find something new and crazy to interest the fans.

Star Wars fans aren't as easy to spot as *Star Trek* fans. They seem a lot quieter.



John Bradley Snyder gets lured to the Dark Side of the Force.

and tries his hand at solving the age-old question, "If they're brother and sister, why are Luke and Princess Leia ramming their tongues down each other's throats?"

How did you become editor of *Star Wars Insider*?

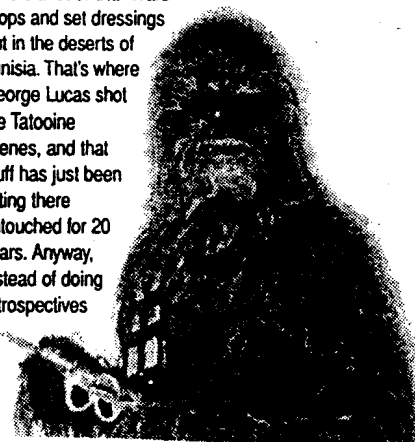
After graduating from Evergreen State College in '91, I went to Europe for three months, and when I came home I got stuck in a really dumb dead-end job. It was so boring, I put together a 10-page zine called "Report from the *Star Wars* Generation" that I gave out to friends, and it wound up getting some attention. This eventually grew into a 30-page magazine. I advertised it in a comic distribution mag and got orders for 15,000 copies—way more than expected. My next issue was about to come out when I got a cease and desist order from Lucasfilm. After getting invited to the Skywalker Ranch, I convinced them to let me work on their *Star Wars* magazine, which was a lot different then.

What changes did you make?

It was kind of dry, but now it's wackier, with more interest in minor characters. For example, I did an article called "The Cult of Wedge," who, if you remember, was the only rebel fighter who lived through all three movies.

Was he the fat guy with the beard?

Nah, that's Porkins; he got killed in the first movie. Wedge is played by Denis Lawson. It's a really small part, maybe three or four lines in each film. I've done stories on people with *Star Wars* tattoos, and we did a great feature called "Return to Tatooine," about an archeologist who discovers a lot of *Star Wars* props and set dressings out in the deserts of Tunisia. That's where George Lucas shot the Tatooine scenes, and that stuff has just been sitting there untouched for 20 years. Anyway, instead of doing retrospectives



Maybe there aren't as many *Star Wars* nerds as *Star Trek* nerds—however! People who distance themselves from being a Trekkie, or following Hootie and the Blowfish, jump in line when you mention *Star Wars*. When it comes to *Star Wars*, even the most staid person is willing to become a blithering idiot.

What groups make up the *Star Wars* cult?

The big one is toy collectors; people obsessed with looking for the Luke Skywalker action figure with blond hair (versus bright gold hair). Then you've got the casual fans, who buy the books, or play *Rebel Assault* on their computers at work. Then there's the online people. There are more *Star Wars* websites than any other entertainment site—literally hundreds. The computer geeks are obsessed with trivia, drinking games, bloopers, and fiction based on *Star Wars*. And then there are the ones too young to have seen *Star Wars* in the theaters, but were introduced by the video games.

So who's the most popular *Star Wars* character?

Some say Han Solo, but I think it's Darth Vader, because his outfit has become such an icon—not to mention he's a badass. Boba Fett is also super-popular. His costume is probably the most well-designed in science fiction history. His outfit tells more of a story than he does—tattoos on his arm, wookiee pelt, a rocket pack, darts, scrapes... it makes you wonder where he's been.

How about the least popular?

The Ewoks. Most people felt they were designed to be a cute marketing idea, killing the drama in *Return of the Jedi*. But not me. For an article I was writing, I sat through two years worth of episodes from the Ewoks cartoons and by the end of it, I got "Helsinki Syndrome." I begrudgingly fell in love with the Ewoks—so I may be a bad person to ask.

Yeah, I'm that way about Urkel from *Family Matters*. Let's move to the trivia portion of our interview. So what's up with Darth Vader's suit? If he takes it off, will he die?

Yes. It contains a respirator that keeps him alive.

But in *The Empire Strikes Back* there's a scene where an Imperial general walks in on him, and he's got his helmet off, lounging around.

Oh... obviously he was in a deep, intense state of meditation that slowed his breathing down to nothing! Yeah! Print that!

All right, next question: Why is Darth Vader so beat up? He looks like shit underneath that mask.

Apparently he fell into a volcano.

A volcano? What did he do? Slip?

That's something that hasn't been clarified yet, but will probably be a major crux in the new movies.

Okay, so what about Lando Calrissian—why is he the only black guy in the *Star Wars* universe?

That's not true! There was a Cloud City security guard that was black. There's also a black person who walks by

the cameras in Jabba's palace. But yeah, I'll admit there's a suspicious lack of African Americans in the *Star Wars* trilogy.

Remember the scene in the cantina where the bounty hunter Greedo is talking to Han Solo? Why are they talking in two different languages? It'd be like me talking to you in Japanese, and you answering in English.

I think it's kind of an arrogance on Solo's part, as if he were saying, "I understand what you're saying, but it's beneath me to respond in your language." It's like when I go to France. They all understand English, but they're not gonna talk to me in English, because they know they'll sound stupid. Han Solo knows he'll sound stupid speaking Greedo's language, even though he understands it. He's an arrogant sonofabitch.

While filming the first movie, did George Lucas already know Luke and Leia were the twins of Darth Vader?

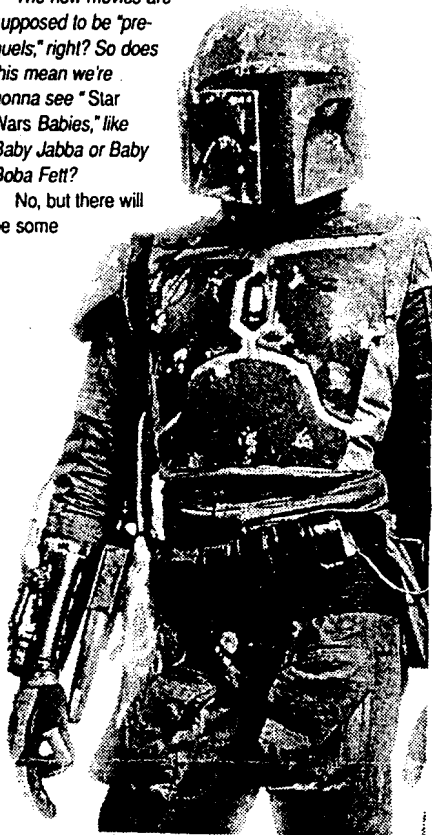
I think that was a plot point that came up after the fact. I mean, Luke and Leia are making out like crazy, for shit's sake!

Yeah, and Darth Vader always makes a big deal out of being able to "sense" when Luke is near, but in the first movie, both of his kids are 10 feet away from him, and he doesn't even blink!

Well, at that point Luke and Leia weren't developed in the force yet. Especially Leia. You don't even see her get "force sensitive" till the very end of *Jedi*. On the other hand, Vader knows Obi-Wan is around, 'cause Obi's like this big "force" neon sign, and Luke doesn't get that way till the second movie.

The new movies are supposed to be "pre-quels," right? So does this mean we're gonna see "Star Wars Babies," like Baby Jabba or Baby Boba Fett?

No, but there will be some



young characters in it. People who have read the script say it's practically gonna be an animated movie—there are so many computer-generated scenes and characters. The first one is gonna focus on Anakin Skywalker's fall from grace—his transformation into Darth Vader.

So who's starring?

They're not finalizing casting till late next year. Anybody tells you differently is a liar.

Most are saying Darth Vader is gonna be played by Kenneth Branagh.

Yep. Not true.

How many installments does Lucas have planned?

I can't imagine more than three movies.

Wouldn't it be advantageous for someone to pick up the reins, like when Gene Roddenberry of *Star Trek* passed on?

Yeah, but I kind of doubt it. Lucas has so much more control over his product than Gene Roddenberry did, and if he doesn't want it to happen, it won't. Not in our lifetimes, anyway.

Joseph Campbell talks about *Star Wars* in *The Power of Myth*; do you agree the trilogy has a lot to offer from a philosophical stand-point?

I don't think you have to go to Joseph Campbell to see the trilogy has something to offer. I think *Star Wars* has something to offer just because it's a goddamn fun film. It has great characters and more care, creativity, and attention to detail than any adventure movie ever made. I won't echo what's been said about the great values behind *Star Wars*, but I will say it has a conspicuous lack of really

repulsive values that you find in most big action movies. That alone is reason enough to like it. For me, that's enough. ■

For a four-issue subscription to *Star Wars Insider*, send a check or money order for \$12.95 to *Star Wars Insider*, P.O. Box 111000, Aurora, CO 80042.

WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO...?

The Force is still with Mark Hamill

By DON SINGLETON

Daily News Staff Writer

Ever since Mark Hamill began his movie career as Luke Skywalker in the blockbuster "Star Wars" trilogy, people have been watching for his next big hit — and asking the "whatever-happened-to" question about him.

But Hamill has never been able to outrun Skywalker's shadow. That role set the bar too high, and he hasn't yet matched the success he and R2D2 enjoyed in what was then the biggest box-office hit in history.

It's not that he hasn't had lots of other roles since then — in fact, he's left his mark in every corner of the acting profession, from Hollywood to small-budget movies to the Broadway stage. Hamill's no has-been; he's just in the company of a lot of famous actors whose stars are regularly dimmed by newer — and younger — arrivals. After all, somebody has to move over when a Brad Pitt or a Meg Ryan rolls into town.

His latest project is a high-tech comic book — or, as he likes to call it, "a five-part graphic novel."

"We're on a roll here," enthused the life-long Californian, who was born 44 years ago in Malibu and still lives there with Marilou, his wife of 17 years, when they're not in their Manhattan apartment. They have three kids, ranging in age from 8 to 18.

The "roll," he explained in a recent interview, has to do with his graphic novel,

"The Black Pearl," the series of five comic books he's now writing. The story is "a crime thriller, fairly raw in terms of violence," he said. "It's about tabloid journalism and sensationalism and all the things that thrillers come from."

And if Hollywood gets interested in the tale, he'd love to be in the director's chair. "But it's tough, because you have to have a track record to direct," he said. "But it's also very exhilarating when you're writing something. When you're writing something, you're playing all the parts."

Another part he has been playing is the voice of a lead character in the CD game, "Wing Commander 4."

It's no small project. "These games are like movies, with scripts almost 2 feet thick," Hamill said. "Doing each game takes 10 to 12 weeks."

"'Wing Commander 3' wound up being the third highest-selling CD game in the history of the media," he said. "'Wing Commander 4' comes out in February, and everybody had better buy it!"

Like his ever-optimistic "Star Wars" character, Hamill is looking ahead with almost boyish enthusiasm.

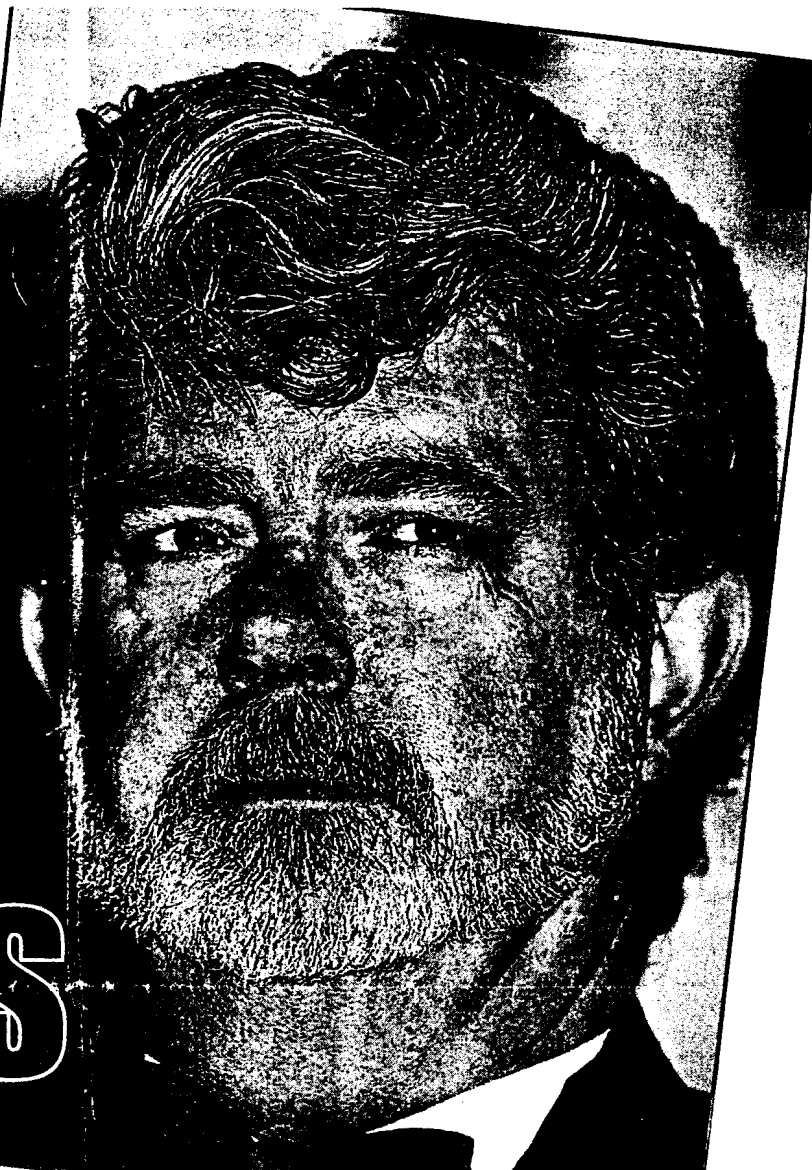
"You know, there's a lot that I've done in my career that's thrilling, and I feel that some of the things have been real accomplishments," he said. "But I feel that what I've done so far is nothing compared with what lies ahead, what I hope to accomplish."

Following Star Wars' relaunch on video, George plans a new trilogy

THE LUCAS EMPIRE STRIKES BACK!

MOVIES

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW



FOR a man whose name is synonymous with technology and the future, Star Wars writer-director George Lucas lives a remarkably uncomplicated life.

To discuss the special high-quality re-release of his Star Wars trilogy on video, the Oscar-winning filmmaker talks to TV WEEK by a satellite video hook-up from his home in San Rafael, northern California – appropriate for a man who runs his multi-million-dollar company, Lucasfilm, far from Hollywood.

"My offices here are in an old Victorian house and I am a history buff, so I'd rather spend time in the past than in the future," he says, grinning at the obvious irony of his confession.

"But, obviously, I work in a very technological medium, and when I am trying to create I don't like roadblocks to stop me from saying what I want to say or creating

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I'd rather spend time in the past than in the future



● George Lucas ... the man behind the Star Wars movies and such fantastic characters as R2D2 and C3PO (left).

what I want to create. I think frustration makes me involved in the technological side of things for them to advance to the point of easing that creative process for me.

"When I come across a stream, I don't wade through it, I like to build a bridge over it."

Since his debut as a director with the 1971 film THX-1138 (which starred Robert Duvall and Donald Pleasence), George has been busy building many bridges between audiences and movie screens.

But it was his 1977 classic, Star Wars, that really put him into the history books, followed by its sequels – The Empire Strikes Back and The

● Continued Page 71

● Continued from Page 18

Return Of The Jedi.

With 16 Academy Awards and 40 nominations under his belt for films he has been associated with, George has also made a significant contribution to the technology of filmmaking with Lucasfilm's THX Division, which set new standards for sound and now shows off the new high-quality digital mastering process that has given Star Wars fans a pristine version of that film on video for the first time.

As always, while Lucas is looking forward – currently writing the next trilogy of Star Wars films to begin production in 1997 and preparing a special 20th anniversary cinema release of Star Wars next year that will include never-before-seen footage – he is also looking back. The limited release of The Star Wars Trilogy: The Definitive Collection takes off in Australia on October 30, through 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment International. After January 31, 1996, the original Star Wars film will be permanently taken off the video market.

THE LUCAS EMPIRE STRIKES BACK!

"While we were working on the special theatrical edition of Star Wars, I started a discussion about trying to bring the video out in a very high-quality version with THX," George says. "It wasn't a marketing plan but just a result of my disappointment that there wasn't a high-quality version out there."

"Obviously the quality has a lot to do with how much you enjoy it."

"Star Wars was originally released on video in the beginning of the whole VCR evolution, and over the years a lot has happened. I really wanted to have a better version out there."

Star Wars has long been regarded

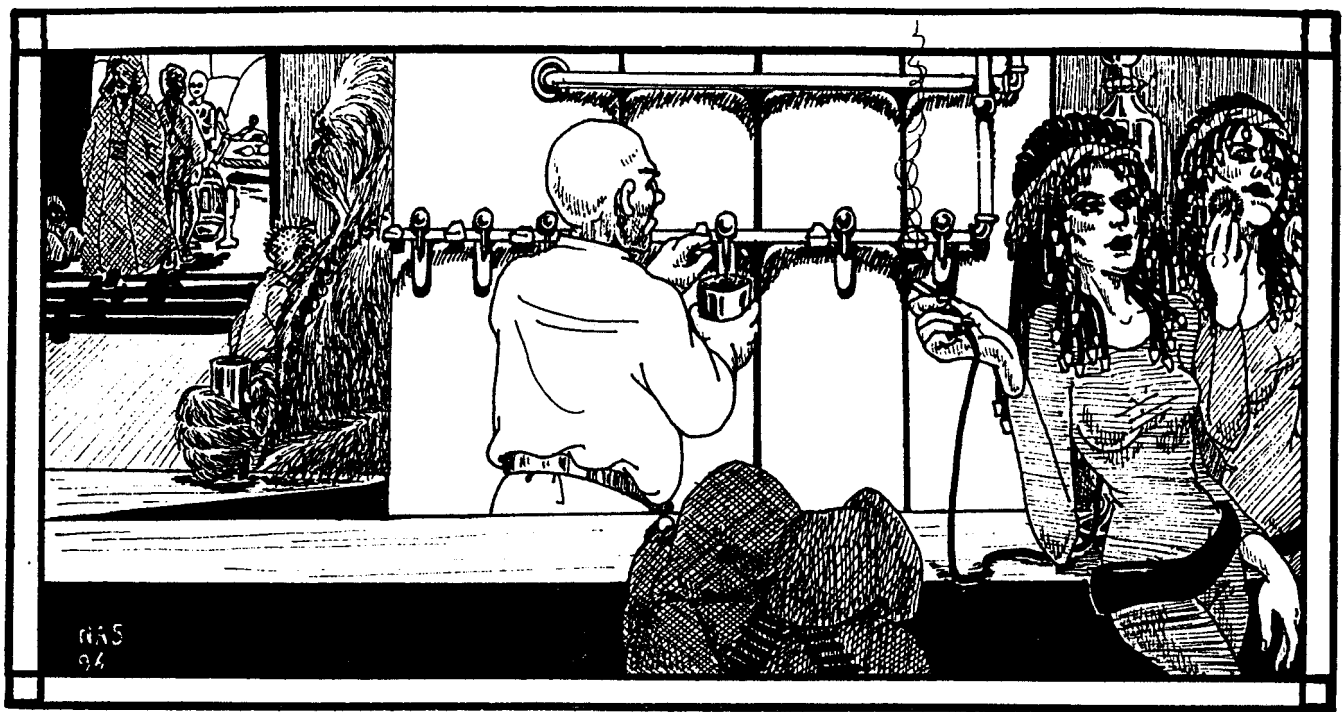
as one of the great movie classics, combining mythology, space fantasy, adventure and romance with groundbreaking special effects and extraordinary space creatures.

"I was trying for a modern mythology," George says.

Successful beyond his wildest dreams, George is now finally writing the second trilogy 20 years later. "They take place before the three that are out on video," he says of the new storyline. "It really has to do with the rise of Darth Vader. It's Darth Vader's story more than anything else, and deals with the character many years before Star Wars and how he became what he was in that film."

From Jenny Cooney in Los Angeles

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FROM A CERTAIN POINT OF VIEW

WAS PALPATINE THE EMPEROR?

Z. P. Florian
6214 Waterway Dr.
Falls Church, VA 22044

First, a deep bow and thank you for voting for *The Rest of the Garbage* — didn't even think it'd be on the ballot, let alone get honorable mention. I was kinda hoping to score with "Rancor Delivery", but not the zine. (Yes, the glazed look in my eyes was tears.)

Mayers: What do you mean two people played Wedge? I missed that. Couldn't agree more, a whole lot of fan writing is really superb. Hey, just count how many fan writers are already published authors.

Wilson: I did think you'd gaffed or something. Loved your reasoning about the Jedi Knighthood in comparison of the US. Yes, this is the freest and best country in the world, but it can still be a horrible place for some on the inside and definitely looks like the Great Satan for others on the outside. Any power is bound to make mistakes. The Empire couldn't exterminate the Jedi without a good number of people cooperating with the effort.

Fredericks: So Lucas will make the sequel, if he is already looking for actors to play Anakin. And actresses, to play a "young queen?" That's fascinating. I just think no matter what he does, it'll be hard to please most of us, because we are already formed Anakins in our minds. Re: what the Rebels knew of Lando to make him a general — yeah, that's a story here... and I think Maggie Nowakowska

did something about it.

Schuller: Yeah, Leia's son wouldn't be called Anakin, tell me again! Excellent explanation on Luke's training that Yoda thought "no more training you require" because the boy *did* confront Vader, learned of his parentage and came out of it quite sane.

Stevn: I agree with your compatriots: *Sabrina* was boring. Can't wait for the Ford+Pitt movie, though. No, Lucas doesn't want Luke to be a monk. In his original story version way back when, Luke was 52 years old, Jedi and had at least a dozen kids, if I remember well. And as for the alien life-forms, yeah, Lucas is no zoologist ... tell me about the space slug... Re: Han or Haan, I think it depends on what language you speak, what planet you are on etc. We should call him as he calls himself. The way Lando says it, I keep thinking of a hen. (I should know about names... my first name is Zsuzsa, and guess why I like Z.P. better!)

Grant: Carrie Fisher helping to write Luke's Mom? Huh? I'm not surprised Hamill didn't like the Ewoks. Ford didn't like ROTJ either. ROTJ sort of let Han float off into a characterless netherworld. ROTJ did a good job with Palpie, Luke, Lando, but the rest of the characters were a lot less than they could have been. And yes — I took it for granted, too, that the Empire was about human supremacy and the Rebellion was about diversity and all species being equal. If it is any different in the pro novels it's because they are just fodder for the role-playing games. Re: the SW book's comments on how Palpatine was controlled by his advisors ... someone noted already that in the movies,

nobody said the Emperor was Palpatine. (Maybe there were a series of Palpatines, like Louis XV and XVI etc.)

Whitney: I agree, Leia is probably too royal and too much of a leader to allow herself to collapse after her planet is destroyed. I usually write her as someone who has had a trauma so deep she didn't even manage to confront it — perhaps she'll have a total mental collapse after the victory.

Karkoska: My favorite is TESB and it didn't leave me missing the upbeat note. In fact, the opera finale of ROTJ was kinda depressing. Perhaps it's not winning the fight, but continuing the struggle is what really inspires. I'm beginning to think that if Lucas portrays a very corrupt, very bad empire, the mere idea that at the end of the third episode a bunch of people decide to take up arms would be a happy ending.

Nowakowska: I wouldn't take anything Kenobi said as the truth, especially not what he said about Anakin being a good friend and a cunning warrior. Mind you, he didn't say Anakin was his apprentice... he said Vader was his pupil. Correct me if I am wrong, but when I first saw the movie, I thought Anakin was Kenobi's friend and fellow fighter, and there was one guy among the students who turned to evil... I can't see teacher and student being friends. I had teachers who were my mentors, my Gods, my surrogate parents, even one whom I ended up dating, but the fact that they were "my masters" precluded friendship in the sense as I have friends now.

Mink: Oh, yes, let's contemplate where the heck did Luke get the black Jedi uniform from?

Campbell: Re: *Braveheart*. In case The Wallace rides again, you will see a little old Hungarian woman with unruly gray hair in the front lines. Would Scots welcome me? I always dreamed of carrying the banner in a just fight ... let me know when war starts. I am not kidding. Looking at it from Hungary, Great Britain was all right, looking at it from the Colonies made me side with anyone who wanted out! Whenever I drive my car, I have Scottish war songs blaring from my cassette player ... who wouldna fetch for Charlie?

Crotty: I think we can safely assume that Owen was about as force-sensitive as your left shoe. I never bought the idea that either Owen or Beru was related to Anakin or Ben or Luke's mom. Owen wasn't anything else but a farmer, unless he was the Galaxy's best actor, able to fool a Force-sensitive kid.

Kittle: One more comment on my door and I will zap you with the Force. There were some mysterious characters at MWC last year and this year, who started a marvelous Yoda-door behind my back in front of my face, and all the credit should go to them, God bless their heart and their creative soul.

Churko: Glad to hear you're back. Wish you well. Yes,

you gotta read the Hambly book.

Palumbo: Oh, what a splendid suggestion to say that perhaps Vader was not a Skywalker? I hope someone will do a story on that ... what if Kenobi was *not* lying at first, and Vader is someone else whom Palpie manipulated into believing that he was Anakin just to catch Luke with the bait? Who knows, maybe Kenobi's ghost was Palpie's Force-projection ... sending Luke to Dagobah so that Palpie can follow the Force-trail to find Yoda ... why did Yoda die? Palpie's assassins poisoned him. Then came the second fake Kenobi apparition, telling Luke that Leia was his twin so he wouldn't marry her and father strong Jedi with her ... plus if Luke can be made to think that he had killed his own father, the trauma would make him easier to manipulate. Stop me, I think I lost control of the horses...

STAR WARS ON THE INTERNET

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August 23, 1996

It's hard to believe that summer is nearly over! School starts in just a little more than a week. Where did the time go?

It was nice to find SE in my mailbox again! Cheree, congratulations on your new house! Enjoyed seeing the pictures. As we near the 50th issue of your letterzine, it occurs to me that, except for a rare italicized comment in a person's letter, you have never written a LoC yourself, at least not during the years I've been involved. I would like to make a request that you please join us by writing a LoC now and then. I know that I would enjoy "listening" to your ideas. How about it, Cheree? I don't think there's any rule that says the editor of a letterzine can't or shouldn't participate. (And if there is, let's change it!) As I see it, the more people sharing ideas, the better! ((Ed: I did a LoC for the very first issue of SE, mostly to fill space, with my thoughts on ROTJ, which had just debuted. I've always sort of felt that the editor should stay in the background as a moderator and not dominate the conversation. I even feel guilty sometimes by interjecting my comments into letters because I feel that people are probably thinking, "Why doesn't she shut up and let the LoCer talk?")

This brings me to the main topic that I wanted to discuss today, which is exchanging ideas and sharing SW stories with even more people. During the past few months, I discovered SW fans and SW fan fiction on the

Internet. I would very much like to bridge the gap between the two fandoms. Many of the online fans had never heard of fanzines and I, at least, did not realize that there was a whole library of fan fiction on the Internet. I recently wrote a very short piece for Dunc's online newsletter that MJ Mink mentioned last issue. In it, I listed fanzines and fanzine editors for the online fans to contact and I posted the address of Ming's fanzine library. Some of these fans were very excited to learn about the existence of fanzines. I know that I felt like a kid in a candy store when I first found the fan fiction page online. I would like to extend an invitation to all of you to try some of the online fan fiction for yourselves. The address for one of the major fan fiction sites is:

<http://www.ftech.net/~monark/starwars/sw.htm>.

That site also has links to several other fiction sites. When you get to the above address, click on the "library" link. That in turn will give you a number of categories to choose from. Some of these include: The Old Republic, The Empire, New Republic, SW Humor, X-Files/SW stories, ST/SW stories, and series stories. You can click on "Showcase" to find the most recent offerings. Another fan fiction address is:

<http://www2.psyber.com/~debra/sw.htm>

I really suggest that you give some of the stories a try. The nice thing about online stories is that they are totally free if you have free Internet access and only cost a few minutes of download time if you don't. If you like a story, you can print it out for yourself. If you don't like it, you can simply delete it. The other nice thing is that you can contact the author directly through e-mail as soon as you finish reading it if you wish, while ideas and reactions are still fresh in your mind. Every author that I have contacted so far has sent back a response. As with all other authors, they enjoy and appreciate feedback. Some of these authors now share chapters of works in progress or whole stories as they complete them. It is really nice to find the surprise of a story, a chapter of a story, or even a whole novel attached to a piece of e-mail now and then!

A few of the online stories that I recommend are: "Three of a Kind" by Kelly, "Stuff" (a silly title, but a well-written novel) by Gheorghe2, "Shooting Stars" (a Tank and Luke story), and "X-Jedi" by Jackee C. (This is a cross between the *X-Files* and SW, and although I had not seen the *X-Files*, it didn't keep me from enjoying this story.) For those of you who like stories in which Luke falls to the Dark (definitely *not* my kind of story, but I must admit that this is well done), there is "A Dark Path" and its sequel "Striving for the Light" by Ali Hadden. A work to look for that is currently in production is "Samizdat" by Shura. That one I highly recommend! There are many, many more stories available. There is something for every SW fan, I think. As with fanzine fiction, some of the

stories are better than others. The only drawback to online fan fiction is the absence of artwork. I'm glad that I've had the opportunity to read both online and fanzine SW fiction.

For those of you who would like to "chat" with other SW fans, a group meets every Tuesday evening from 9:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. in a private room on AOL called "Star Ladies". Despite the name (which may be changed soon), *all* fans are welcome, so Tim, Matthew, Gerald, John, Rich and any other guys out there, don't be shy! Novels, fan fiction, new merchandise, and anything else involving SW is discussed. Some sessions are saner than others, but there are some good people here, and it's generally a fun place to be. Give it a try!

I *do* find it interesting that many of the authors of the online fiction that write post ROTJ tales *do* use some of the events and characters introduced in the pro novels in their stories, while most of the authors who write for fanzines use only the events and characters of the films themselves usually. Please don't let that fact stop you from reading these stories! You will be missing out on some truly fine and very enjoyable SW fiction.

This brings me to something else I wanted to discuss today — *the pro fiction books*. A lot of people, online and off (myself included a number of times), have been highly critical of the pro books. Even many of the authors of online fiction who have utilized characters and situations from the pro fiction have criticized much of it. Yet I'm glad that the pro fiction exists and I'm glad that a lot of other people are interested in reading stories about the SW characters that I love. I also must admit that with only one exception (*The Crystal Star*, which in my opinion has *no* redeeming qualities!), I *have* found something enjoyable or creative or interesting or well-done about all of the pro novels. All (with the exception noted above!) have been worth reading. It's true that I often find that I wish the pro authors would have done something differently or had done a better job with a characterization, but I'd rather have the books available than not, and I'd rather read them than not.

With that said, I also *don't* think that the pro books are canon. I think that if George Lucas ever decided to make his third trilogy someday, he will do things *his* way and ignore what has been written in the novels. (I actually doubt that he has read any of them himself.) I look at the pro books as another SW universe to enjoy. Ellen Randolph had one universe. Maggie Nowakowska wrote her own totally different and complete universe. Jeanine Hennig had another, Marti Schuller has yet another, as does Louise Turner, as does Carolyn Golledge, as does Mary Jean Holmes, and so on. All of them have been unique and, while I have liked some better than others, I have gotten enjoyment from reading all of these universes and many other ones. None of them were or are totally

perfect, but I'm still glad that I had the opportunity to read them. I feel the same way about the pro books. I have heard some people in SE mention that they have not read the pro books and that they don't care to do so. That is, of course, your right. I'd just like to humbly suggest that you keep an open mind and not totally dismiss them without even giving them a try. If you can afford the time and the money, you might find yourself pleasantly surprised to discover that many of them are fairly good. Some of them may even give you other ideas for writing your own stories, which may end up being vastly better than what some of the books have to offer. This has been the case with some of the stories written by online SW fans.

While I'm on the topic of the pro books, I liked *Shield of Lies* better than Kube-McDowell's first book. He has a nasty, fascinating villain in Nil Sparr, and the main story about the conquest of the Yevetha is intriguing. The ending was exciting and rather surprising. I'm looking forward to the third book. K-Mac writes a great Lando! Luke's characterization was a lot better in this one. (He's far more normal and he even has a sense of humor!), but I still don't understand why he wants to search for a mother he never knew or why he allows that untrustworthy Akanah to boss him around.

I enjoyed Judith Yuenger's report on MediaWest*Con. I have never attended a Con but I always enjoy hearing about them. Congratulations to all of the winners of the STAR aWARDs. I'd like to thank you and all other SW authors, artists, and zine editors for providing many hours of SW reading enjoyment.

Z. P. Florian: I liked your artwork in the last issue of SE, particularly your drawing of Luke on p. 52. K-Mac wrote a good chapter in *Shield of Lies* with Lobot and Lando. Did you read it? Please *do* write more stories of Luke's two dozen sons! I'm glad that you like the idea of Luke married ... and with children.

John Fredericks: I *do* think that we will eventually see the prequels, though I wouldn't count on them before the year 2000! As I've said before, though, I would much prefer to see the sequels and those I *very* much doubt we'll ever see. I agree that story and characters are what's important to me. I can do without fancy special effects. Unfortunately, Lucas seems far more concerned with the look of a picture than with its content or characters. The kinds of changes that he is making to the Special Editions prove that.

I must admit that I prefer to read SW stories that include Luke, Han and Leia as the main characters in both pro and fan fiction. I enjoy stories in which other characters play major roles as long as the Big Three have major parts, too. I liked Louise Turner's *The Ormand Factor* for instance, in which Wedge is a major character, because Leia, Han and especially Luke were involved, too.

Even though the first two pro X-wing novels were not bad stories, I didn't enjoy them as much because those three characters were *not* included. Those novels didn't have the same attraction or the same SW feel to them, in my opinion. I really miss those characters when they are absent or when they have only very minor roles. You will probably like *Shield of Lies* with Lando's expanded role.

Speaking of Lando, he was probably accepted by the Rebel Alliance because he was instrumental in helping Luke and Leia return safely to the Rebel Fleet. Lando really didn't have a whole lot of choice about helping Vader. He did regret helping to set the trap for Luke, and the pain he caused Han and Leia, and he did try to make amends. If Luke and Leia were willing to forgive him and trust him, the rest of the Alliance was probably willing to accept him too. As you said, most of the Rebels probably joined under "strange circumstances" and many members of the Alliance may even have been Imperials at one time, like Biggs, who jumped ship and defected after graduation. I don't think Luke or Leia told the Alliance about the "Battle of Tanaab". They probably didn't know anything about it. It was probably Han who mentioned that to the brass at the time that he volunteered for the Endor mission, after his Tatooine rescue. Han was the one who knew Lando in the past. Luke and Leia never met him before Bespin.

A. G. Steyn: I just wanted to say that I *very* much enjoyed your story "Surprise, Surprise" in *I Don't Care What You Smell* #2. It was a nice portrait of the Lars family and their relationship with one another. It was a cute, funny, folksy piece!

I can't quite imagine Leia repairing vaporators on Tatooine either. You could be right though that she may have gotten along better with Uncle Owen. She would have been less prone to daydreaming than Luke. On the other hand, Leia has the same Skywalker stubbornness, she *can* have a temper, and she likes to be in charge, so there may still have been plenty of rather heated arguments.

Pat Grant: I hope your surgery went very well and that you are now in good health. TRU, as I'm sure many people will tell you, is short for "Toys R Us", the big toy store chain where many SW toys and the 3-D *Falcon* puzzle can be purchased.

Interesting that Carrie Fisher will be involved in helping to write the prequel movies!

Your idea of Ben Kenobi manipulating Luke into wanting to "take on Vader" one day not only because of the deaths of his aunt and uncle, but also because he personally witnessed Ben's death at the hands of Vader, is a very interesting one, and it *is* possible. You mentioned though that perhaps Kenobi didn't just kill Vader himself on the Death Star because he felt it wasn't the "right time." I would think that *any* time that you can rid the Galaxy of

a villain like Vader would be the *right* time! Just think of how many deaths Vader caused in the next three years of his life! If he could have been killed on the first Death Star, those people would probably have been very grateful! ((Ed: *On the other hand, perhaps Kenobi and Yoda were seeing farther into the future and realized that only Vader could kill the Emperor; Luke would never be strong enough. Or that the two of them together would be necessary to kill the Emperor; neither would be strong enough alone. Killing Vader too soon would have only prolonged a horrible situation by removing the only chance they had of remedying it.*))

I still think that Tatooine was a remote rimworld. There certainly didn't seem to be very many people actually living there. Mos Eisley seemed to be the most crowded place on the planet, which makes sense since it was the spaceport. Many smugglers and people who were at least marginally outside the law seemed to be there. Remember that Ben told Luke they needed to be cautious. A remote planet *would* attract those who might be involved in illegal activities, because it would be less likely that they would be caught if they were on a planet out at the edge of the Galaxy (sort of in the middle of nowhere). Even Jabba had quite an operation going on Tatooine. I think that the stormtroopers arrived *after* the space battle above Tatooine, as they landed to try to locate the droids. (...and according to the radio version of ANH, it was Leia who led them to the planet as she was going there to enlist Kenobi's help. Luke witnessed the space battle that took place near Tatooine in which Leia was captured.)

I don't want Luke to settle for just anyone either. However, who's to say he won't find the perfect person to be a mate for him? I hope he *can* find the right person and then *my* advice to him would be: Go for it, Luke!

Matthew Whitney: When someone is dying, it is a rather strange time to be giving that person commands. You are probably right. Ben was probably trying to help Luke focus his mind on something so he wouldn't fall asleep in the snow and die. He was trying to keep the kid alive until help (in the form of his best friend, Han) could get to him. This latest near death experience of Luke's may have also convinced Kenobi that the boy needed Jedi training as soon as possible to at least give him an edge in staying alive. Jedi skills would improve his chances of surviving the war. Only if he survived himself would he be able to restore the Order.

Unfortunately, I don't approach my LoCs in the scholarly way in which you do. If I *did*, I would probably never turn in a LoC. There are so many things that I *must* do every day and so many things that I enjoy doing, that there simply wouldn't be time to write one if I wrote them as I used to write term papers. I figure that a LoC that jumps wildly from topic to topic with very little

organization is better than no LoC at all. I just hope I'll be forgiven if I don't use fancy prose or well-constructed sentences, or if my letters aren't always totally coherent. I *do* stick a tiny 1½" x 2" Post-It Note next to something I want to respond to later as I'm reading SE. That *does* help.

I bet your students *love* your ties!

Maggie Nowakowska: I enjoyed your Lucas quotes from *Cinefex*. Thanks for sharing them! As long as she would make *Luke* happy and would be good for him, I wouldn't care who Luke chose for a wife. I wouldn't care whether his friends or family approved of his choice either. There is an interesting story by an online author called "Successor to the Dark Side" in which Luke gets a lot of grief from Mon Mothma and everyone else in the Galaxy because he wants to marry Mara Jade. It's really an excellent story.

All of the timelines that I have seen for the last 6 months proclaim Luke to be 18 in ANH. All of the pro fiction books use this benchmark to calculate his age in each succeeding book.

I agree with you about Ben and the lightsaber. I also *very definitely* agree with you about Vader. It was *not* Ben's fault that Anakin became Vader. It was Anakin Skywalker who "caused Vader to happen." He chose the Dark. No one did that for him. I also agree that although Ben was flawed and imperfect (and what human being isn't?), he was basically a good man.

M. J. Mink: As Marti Schuller said, it's obvious that I'm not going to be able to convince those of you who feel Luke should remain a loveless, childless, single person, a slave to duty and the Force only, that it would be better if he married and had children, in addition to his duties and the Force. Likewise, there's no way you will change *my* mind about this. Therefore, I won't even attempt to change your mind anymore. However, I did want to discuss the comment that you made: "...though for someone lovelorn, he certainly made very few efforts to find and hold onto a woman." That's very true. Luke does not initiate relationships very often in the novels or in fan fiction. Actually, that's very much in character for the way most authors have been writing Luke. In my opinion, for all of his many Jedi gifts and talents, Luke Skywalker does *not* seem to have a really good *personal* self image. He doesn't seem to recognize his own charms and attractiveness to women, both physically and in his character traits. Instead, he lacks self-confidence. He worries about whether he's good enough or worthy enough, or whether he is like his father, or if he will make the same mistakes with another generation. In some of the fiction, he doesn't seem to think that anyone could be interested in him. As just an example, in Ellen Randolph's universe, Luke once said to Ben Kenobi, "Who would want me? I'm Darth Vader's son!" This slightly unsure-of-

himself Luke *wouldn't* initiate a relationship unless someone showed an interest first, and wouldn't push the issue if a person broke off the relationship. (Like Callista.) I think a host of psychiatrists would have a field day if there really were a Luke Skywalker! Between his relationships with women and his relationship with his father and his uncertainties about the Force and the Jedi, his fear of the Dark Side and of unleashing a Dark Jedi on the Galaxy, the poor boy could keep them all busy for several lifetimes! (On more than one occasion, after a space battle with other fighters, Luke even worried about the integrity of killing opponents in self-defense while using the Force because he felt it gave him an unfair advantage. This is one major reason why I think Luke needs a wife in his life. He needs someone to tell him not to worry about everything and not to be so hard on himself all the time, to trust his instincts and not brood about every decision afterwards. He needs someone to remind him to "lighten up" now and then.)

Catriona Campbell: Welcome back! You were missed! Congratulations on your engagement! I really enjoyed reading both "Missing" and "Legitimate Target". You are a very good writer and I'm looking forward to more SW stories from you in the near future. I only hope that you will write one in which poor Luke finally completes a successful mission. I'm afraid that if he has one more failure, he's going to need a psychiatrist in your universe, too. (If he doesn't already!)

I agree with your comments to M. J. Mink about Vader attacking Luke on Bespin and about Vader being clearly outmatched by Luke in ROTJ.

Luke didn't kill the Gamorrean guards when he entered Jabba's Palace. The novelization (which is canon material), says: "Two Gamorreans stepped up, blocking his path. Luke raised his hand and pointed at the guards. Before either could draw a weapon, they were both clutching their own throats, choking, gasping. They fell to their knees. Luke lowered his hand and walked on. The guards, suddenly able to breathe again, slumped to the sand-drifted steps. They did not follow." He made sure that they didn't interfere with his mission, but he didn't kill them.

Tim Blaes: Enjoyed your comment: "...maybe Luke uses the Kaiburr crystal as a paperweight on his desk at the Jedi Academy." Maybe it helps to keep the students in line! (Obviously, he didn't have it on his desk when he was training Kyp Durron.) Also enjoyed your comment about making predictions for the *National Enquirer*. Agree that if we forget the past, we're doomed to repeat it.

Gerald Crotty: I agreed with all of the items on your wish list for the Special Editions. I chuckled over your comment: "...there will be more scenes with Max Rebo, et al. Haven't we suffered enough?" Yes! I think we have!

In my opinion, I think increasing the screen time for the aliens is going to slow the films down. Slowing down the pace of the films is something which George Lucas seems to worry about. That's why he says he won't include the Biggs scenes. Actually, I'd be willing to pay extra just to see those scenes! Maybe if Lucas feels there's money to be gained from those scenes, he'll make a special video edition that includes them. I wouldn't even care if they didn't include music and if they were a little unpolished.

Last I heard, the films, the radio shows and novelizations of the films are *still* the only canon material.

I certainly agree with you about Luke! I'm tired of the Dark Luke characterizations too! (I really never did like *Dark Empire*.) The Luke of the films is a likeable, open, optimistic person and being a Jedi *shouldn't* entirely change his personality. I too think Luke would have a sense of humor and would continue to care about the friends that he made before he became a Jedi. I agree that he doesn't have to spend every minute of his life "focused on Jedi Knight business". It would make him a very boring, one-dimensional person.

The new Jabba doesn't look fat enough or ugly enough. There are some good SW/X-Files crossovers in the fanzine library if you have Internet access. As I said before, a story called "X-Jedi" is particularly well-written and enjoyable.

Debbie Kittle: Please tell Mary Jo Fox to return to SE. I miss her and, from the comments from other folks, it appears I'm not alone. I agree that we all need to respect one another's views and we need to be a little more tolerant. I think it's great that SW appeals to so many people of so many ages. I welcome all new and newly returned fans. I think there is a place for all of us. Most fans seem to agree.

Rich Gawel: Welcome to SE! I enjoyed your LoC. Check out the SW/X-Files section on the online zine library. I think you'll be happy!

Louise Turner: I enjoyed reading your new story, "A.W.O.L." I'm looking forward to the sequel. Where will it be published? Will Luke be involved in your new novel? Please say "yes"! Who is Deenie? Maggie's universe is good, isn't it? Did you ever read Ellen Randolph's *Sanctuary* universe? I think you'd like it. Have you read the X-wing novels and the X-wing comics? What do you, the biggest Wedge fan in this or any other galaxy, think of them?

Catherine Churko: Welcome back to you, too! Hope you're feeling better!

Amanda Palumbo: I agree with you about Luke's growth. I wish more authors, both pro and fan authors, would reflect this growth in their stories. Sometimes the Jedi Master is still portrayed as a rather immature, dumb little boy who sometimes seems to forget he *can* use the

Force! Often the Solo kids are portrayed as a lot more talented, mature, and practical than their supposedly gifted uncle!

Nancy Stasulis: I really liked your Cantina drawing on page 18. Your LoC seemed to be missing though. Maybe we'll get to read it next issue. ((Ed: Nancy's Yoda cartoon WAS her LoC!))

To Everyone: Until next time, GO WITH THE FORCE!

DEVELOPMENTS

Matthew Whitney
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August 27, 1996

A new issue of SE and WOW ... have there been developments in my life (though mostly on a "mundane" level). First, after eleven years of teaching in the same school, I got laid off due to declining enrollment at the 90 year old dilapidated building they call a high school. The school took an overall 40% reduction in staff, with my old department (Business Ed.) going down from about 25 to 8 teachers. Fortunately for me, I've been taking courses to get certified to teach math. While I still have a couple of classes to go to finish my undergrad math degree, certification requirements differ, thus I applied for — and got — certified. So, I was able to be rehired as a math teacher in the same building.

Meanwhile, several other teachers with more experience and degrees than I transferred to a newly opened "High School of Science and Technology", so I landed the "top" schedule in the Math Department — teaching AP Calculus and Algebra 2 (regular and honors divisions). I even volunteered to take on department chairperson duties — quite a leap from being out on my butt without a job. And this was not the routine teacher layoff notice ... the job was eliminated! There were promises to try and place the ousted Business teachers, but in the teaching game, certification is the key to any job.

So, that was quite a harrowing time to go through even though I was very confident that I would land the Math job. There was a distinct chance of getting shipped down to Middle School, and working one's way back up is usually extremely difficult, so I'm very lucky.

On a rewarding note, I was delighted to be informed that a student from a couple of years back named me as an inspirational teacher on his "Who's Who Among American HS Students" paperwork — thus my being recognized in the 1995-96 "Who's Who Among American Teachers."

I'm thrilled enough to toot my own horn over this, though the honor boils down to the privilege of being able to *buy* a fancy book with my name in mirco type plus a wall plaque. But, heck, us teachers are so desperate for those pats on the back that we'll take whatever comes within reach.

So, I'm breathing a great sigh of relief at returning to school this autumn and am actually looking forward to the classes I'll be teaching.

Turning to the *fun* stuff...

Reaction to reading Barbara Hamby's *Children of the Jedi*: I was disappointed. It never flowed, rather it seemed very disjointed and uneven. Much of it was a catalog of alien creatures, which hardly interests me at all. As many say, it's not the FX that makes the Saga so appealing, so too is it not merely a parade of exotic creatures. Yes, they are fun on screen, but when the story has to be pushed aside to explain an alien who really does not add to the plot — something is wrong. I've read worse, but I've read much, much better.

John Fredericks: Your suspicion that the prequels will never be made is one I've shared for a long while, sometimes hoping maybe they will, other times doubting it severely. It is delightful, however, that SW is back in the public's attention and seeing the trilogy on the big screen again will be a blast. Yes, even if the motive is more \$\$\$ for the LFL coffers. As for the FX emphasis on the special editions, it probably won't harm them too much, and it'll no doubt be only us dinosaurs who do the griping at any problems. And as much as I'll enjoy the theater experience again, I think half the fun will be watching a new generation of kids get as inspired as I was back in those days.

How would Luke and Leia have introduced Lando to the rebels? Actually, I think Chewbacca might have been the one. Luke took quite a beating in TESB and I doubt the leaders would have let Leia go chasing Boba Fett, putting herself in danger, at least not right off. Chewbacca was going right back after Han, and Lando probably talked them into trusting him enough to go with Chewie. That would probably serve as his proving grounds. Chewie would probably not have taken keenly to that, for he still blamed Calrissian for Han's capture, but there must be something in Lando's past with Han that said he wasn't all bad (or Chewie really would have ripped him to pieces). Once they'd tailed Boba to Jabba's, Lando would have had to have done something to renew that trust, so it may well have been Chewie's testimony that brought him into the fold.

General comment on the naming of the kids: The negative reactions to the choices in the pro novels reminds me of a discussion with a pen pal in re Catherine and Vincent's son in *Beauty and the Beast*. The choice there

was "Jacob", after Father, but my pal said an even more appropriate choice would have been "Jacob Chandler", to honor Catherine as well. But then, 3rd season of that series was such a hash job, the naming of the child was actually a good moment (though I don't despise that season as many fans do).

Anyone looking for a good read (non-SW)? May I suggest *The Physics of Star Trek*. The science is *real*, not a lot of techno-babble that means nothing. It shows how close/far from real issues many ST topics are, and is exceptionally readable. I even used it as a research source for a geometry paper last term (topic: Dimensions/Curved Spacetime). Also, Barnes & Noble have a great series of classic mysteries, gorgeously bound and at a \$4.98 price that is a steal, including *The Maltese Falcon*, one of my all-time faves!

Pat Grant: Re the quotes you cited from the ANH novelization dealing with the Emperor v. Imperial Governors. I reckon that to be the author's attempt to paint Moff Tarkin as a substantial villain rather than a bloke just following his superior's orders. With the Emperor not on the scene, the shift of control to the governors did not take away from other characters who were established on screen. This is another reason why I feel the novelizations aren't canon, for the authors were fleshing out material in a way that might not mesh with Lucas' plan (much like my goal in many a fanfic story was to elaborate on a scene here and there).

If SW were done in the 50's and with tacky FX ... didn't we see the result with *Flash Gordon*? Sorry to those who like it, but that movie was a BOMB by my standards (except for some fun performances by Von Sydow, Blessed, and Dalton).

Maggie Nowakowska: Greedo fired first, you say, according to info from LFL and the ANH-sp. ed... Definitely a bad move. Is this a politically correct inspired backing off? That was a defining moment for Han. I don't even think this action made Han "ambiguous." His motive was clear as crystal. He was fighting for his life with a hired gun who was about to waste him. The only thing that even gave Han a chance was that Greedo had wanted to gloat first.

By the by, we need an abbreviation for Special Edition. SE won't really fit for these pages, for obvious reasons. Suggestions? ((Ed: How about "sped"?))

Gerald Crotty: Re Kenneth Branagh. I'd not say he is the only possible choice to play OWK (though he'd be a good one, IMHO), I must disagree with your rejection of his acting ability. I think he is brilliant and the best thing to happen to Shakespeare in our generation. An English teacher and I bump heads on this from time to time: we both like his films but my colleague agrees with you on his acting. I'm a bit befuddled why he chose *Hamlet* for his

next Shakespearean project. So few Shakespeare plays are adapted to the big screen and, what with Mel Gibson's wonderful version only a few years ago, I'd have opted for something different.

I quite agree with your observation that if the ending of the Sp. Ed. of ROTJ features celebration scenes on Coruscant, they had better establish early in the film what the location is.

Liz Sharpe: You praised a pro convention called Visions that brought Dave Prowse and Peter Mayhew to your area. Could the full name of the group be "Infinite Visions" and no relation to "Visions", the annual con in Chicago during Thanksgiving weekend (bringing in a large number of Brit media celebrities from DW, B7, *Red Dwarf*, RoS, etc.)? I attended an "Infinite Visions" show in Boston, 8/24, and was *very* disappointed. Not that I was expecting the greatest con ever, it being a pro-endeavor, but this was also the first con that ever inspired me to write a letter of complaint (while I often send the Chicago folk a letter of thanks for the tremendous job they do).

The problem with this Boston show as false/insufficient advertising. The guest line up was D. Prowse, P. Mayhew, Jeremy Bulloch, Kenny Baker, Warwick Davis, and ST's Armin Shimerman, Robert Duncan McNeil (and some others). They did *not* advertise that the SW guys would be charging for their autographs. This was a first for me in over a decade of cons and some of my group did not budget for this added expense. Next, they had those regular v. preferred admission ticket scales. I've seen them before and have always opted for the regular because preferred is usually only marginally better (in terms of seating) and, while regular admission does not "guarantee" autographs, usually if the celebrity starts signing, only if the lines are ridiculously long does anyone lose out. Were we in for a shock!

The security really enforced not moving up to the vast empty spaces reserved for the "preferred" ticket holders (even when the SW guys were taking to rows of empty seats) and then the two ST guests signed *only* for those who had paid extra. The "not guaranteed" disclaimer turned out to be a hollow lie, for it was obvious there would not be even an attempt made to get autographs for those with regular admissions. Talk about not being fan friendly! They outdid Creation's dreadful track record in being interested in the almighty dollar. They'll not get my business again (and it really tarnished finally getting to meet Kenny). I do not fault the SW guests for charging, by the way. Most guests are paid fees these days and, if they want to structure the deal that way, fine. But, inform the fans that they'll need an extra \$5 per guest per autograph. That adds up very quickly.

On a positive note, let me add my praises to yours in regards to Dave Prowse, a great ambassador for SW. If

anyone recalls a photo I had reproduced in SE years ago, where Dave took me into a Vaderish choke hold for a hilarious photo ... well, when I met him again a couple of years ago, I had an 8x10 of that shot. He enjoyed it so much he asked me to send him a copy and even offered to pay the expense I'd incur by getting a reprint. Naturally, I refused that wonderful gesture and sent him an extra 8x10, tickled that he'd even asked. And anyone who has seen his slide shows on his career and world travels knows what a delightful speaker he is. Bravo, Dave!

I just realized, by the next issue of SE, we'll possibly have already seen the special edition of ANH. SW films in theaters again ... ahhh, all is right with the world!

Follow the Force!

WARM MEMORIES

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Well, having sent my last LoC in prior to attending MWC, allow me a moment to say how wonderful it was to see you all again. I look forward each year to this all-too-brief respite and to visiting with SW friends. This last con was definitely "off", but being with so many friends can never be completely tainted. It was especially fun to meet our overseas attendees and I hope to see you all again next year.

Congrats to all the STAR aWARDs winners and honorable mentions. A special "well done" to Cheree and Judy on their individual recognition awards. No two deserve it more.

I've been suggesting to Debbie Kittle that at next MWC she should get a group photo of all the medal winners (and another of the "honorable") that could possibly be printed in the following SE. We both love the idea and hope to get Judy to make the request formally next year. Out of curiosity, does everyone else like this notion as well?

As always, I loved seeing the photos (myself excluded!) in SE. Your home is lovely, Cheree, and I wish you only peace and joy there for many years to come. Seeing the MWC pix brought back warm memories, too. Too bad the Vader's bedroom photo came out too dark to use because it was marvelous, as was the entire doll display. You gals responsible top yourselves every year.

Pat Grant: I was so sorry to read of your surgery. I sincerely hope that by now you're fully recovered and doing well, with no further operations looming.

I dearly adore your marvelous idea for a SW bake sale, though Cheree's point is, unfortunately, quite valid. (Wouldn't want to poison any loyal fans.) But if it can be

worked out, put me down for a purchase! Seems there's a lot of chocolate/SW lovers out there and I'm sure you'd sell out rapidly.

"SWans"? Personally, I describe myself as a "Force Follower" but I suppose that name wouldn't really suit Han fans well.

I, too, am a long time Danny Kaye fan! What a great talent! Thank goodness for film where those we love never die. I'm also a giant fan of John Wayne and Gregory Peck.

Matthew Whitney: I really like your comparison of SW fans to archaeological researchers, though I have no expertise in the field.

Maggie Nowakowska: I look forward to seeing you again at MWC '97.

Thank you so much for your comments re Kenobi "making" Anakin turn to the Dark Side. Your words stated my beliefs magnificently.

M. J. Mink: Thanks for your kind comment on my son. No takers yet, but I've decided I'm not ready for mother-in-law or grandmother status yet anyway.

Are you and Z. P. working on your alternate stories yet? If not, why not?! We're waiting!

Catriona Campbell: Welcome back, lady! I've sorely missed you. No apology is necessary to me either. I've had enough younger friends in my life to realize how all-consuming and blinding first love can be. I was lucky (?) to get into fandom at the stage of life I did, when few distractions so completely absorbed my attention and fandom merely provided the best outlet I could ever hope to find. Be happy, my friend. I look forward to seeing your wonderful writing again most of all. Say "hi" to David for me.

Oops, who says Luke killed those two Gamorrean guards in ROTJ? I've always thought he only choked them into unconsciousness so they wouldn't interfere. Am I alone in this evaluation?

Gerald Crotty: Thanks for sharing those wonderful photos from that con. It was marvelous to see the actors again.

Debbie Kittle: Ditto thanks for sharing the pix with Mr. Prowse. My, my, what a steamy embrace Cheryl has him — or is it vice versa? — locked in. Cold showers, anyone? :)

Thanks also for the congrats on *Smelly's* Fan Q. Judy and I appreciate everyone who voted for us and we treasure the award.

Rich Gawel: Welcome to SE! I know you're gonna love it here.

I, too, am an *X Files* fan, but I've never considered any connection between that interest and SW. I tend to really enjoy any good sci-fi or fantasy related programs. Reality was made by Hoover and sucks with industrial strength, so any plausible escape is more than welcome for me. I also

adore *Hercules*, *Xena*, the ST programs, etc., and am eagerly awaiting the promising-looking fall TV lineup. ((Ed: What did everyone think of *Dark Skies*? I was blown away! Like a combination of *XF*, *The Fugitive*, *The Invaders*, *Aliens*, etc., all rolled up into one! Looks like it's going to be a great show!))

Louise Turner: Hello, again. It was terrific getting to meet you in Lansing, in spite of our delayed recognition of each other. I hope to see you there again next year.

This is definitely a short reply for me and I apologize to all I missed. Catch you next issue? I wish everyone good healty, joy, autumnal beauty and inner peace. 'Til next time...

PREQUEL SPECULATIONS

Gerald Crotty
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Hello, everyone.

Z. P.: That quote you mentioned about Ford saying he wanted to die in ROTJ appeared in *Time* magazine in May 1983. Actually, I'm not sure that by dying it would've made Han's character "better". I certainly agree with the general idea that Han was less interesting in ROTJ, but I'm not sure Ford is completely blameless. Sure, Lucas is responsible ultimately but I think the actor has a number of opportunities to improve on the script. Ford did this in the first two but didn't seem that eager to in ROTJ. He does seem a bit emasculated in ROTJ, too. I'm thinking of the scene where Mon Mothma is giving her talk and Han is sitting with Leia. The whole scene makes Han look like a good little schoolboy who sits at the front with his girlfriend and sheepishly raises his hand when the "teacher" asks for a volunteer. Han should stand at the back with "the guys". Well, actually, no, he shouldn't do that either. A character should grow, I suppose, but did he have to be such a drip?

Veronica Wilson: On the subject of Kenobi, I have to say that most of my reactions to him are not colored by what he did or said, but more by the simple fact that Alec Guinness was playing the part. By that I mean that it seemed more Guinness than Kenobi. I just felt that he wasn't taking it seriously. I'm not saying it's a bad performance, just that he comes across as a bit of a snob. He's one of those actors that seem to have achieved the status of Great Actor, but I'm not sure why. He's quite good in some things but never great.

John Fredericks: You're right about Lando. LFL

doesn't seem to know what to do with him. His character was given no development at all in ROTJ. But he's a good character. I'm surprised they haven't used him more in the novels or a comic mini-series would be good.

A. G.: Hey, now waitaminnit — you said that most of the Imps were lacking in the "looks" dept. Most of those characters were played by British actors. What are you saying? You're right, of course. What about Jerjerrod? Actually, I worry about some of these names that Lucas comes up with or maybe I just have a filthy mind. But I've always wondered how Jerjerrod's name is pronounced — I mean, if the second "j" is spoken like a "k"...

Pat Grant: Your mention of those time travel books reminded me of a book that I've been trying to find for a couple of years now. And if Cheree doesn't mind, I'd like to enlist the help of the SE readers in identifying it. A friend described the plot to me of this book he'd read about 10 years ago, but he couldn't remember the title or author. So, if this synopsis rings a bell, please let me know. It's basically a time loop story, sort of like *Groundhog Day*, but in this case the loop covers about 20 years, the 60's and 70's. The main character remembers each previous loop. Eventually he meets a young girl who is also conscious of the loop. Sometimes they change history or get involved in famous events. Does this sound familiar to anyone? I've always loved time loop stories. If anyone has read any other good ones, please let me know. ((Ed: One of my all time favorite time loop stories is Heinlein's "By His Bootstraps". You can find it in some of his anthologies.))

Re the Emperor — I think he developed his ugly features as a result of overusing the Dark Side of the Force. Speaking of Palpatine, Louise and I were discussing whether Ian McDiarmid will be cast as the Emperor in the prequels. I hope so.

A Headmaster from a school in Invergorden, Scotland, was on the radio a couple of weeks ago saying that Lucasfilm had used his school to do a casting call for a young teenage boy and girl to appear in the SW prequels.

Matthew Whitney: Like you, I was 15 when I first saw SW. The film didn't open here until January '78 but the previous Autumn I kept hearing about this SF movie that had broken all box office records, etc. But I was skeptical. SF movies often promised more than they could deliver. Up until this point, my main passion had been DC Comics but I'd been bored with them for over a year. I think I was on the verge of growing up and then SW came along. I read the novel in the Autumn of '77 and was just knocked out by it. It was easily the best story I'd ever read. I could never understand why critics dismissed the story. I guess they were just too dazzled by the effects. I figured if the movie itself was half as good as the novel, it would be great. It was, of course. Mark Hamill surprised me most. I really liked his portrayal of Luke. I saw all three

performances on the first day and many more times after that.

Marlene: I don't think the prequels will be depressing. We know there'll be a certain amount of tragedy, but that's good. It's the tragic elements of TESB which give so much depth to the existing trilogy. It makes it more than just a set of adventure movies. Okay, let's speculate a little about the prequels:

1st film — we have a young Anakin, maybe an orphan. He has Force abilities but doesn't understand what they are. In typical Greek tragedy style, I imagine we'll get a scene showing how the seeds of his own destruction are already planted within him. I think he'll already have a lot of anger in him, unable to trust people. Along comes Ben who helps him to understand his power. Meanwhile, Palpatine is engineering a conflict between two peoples or races. Ben and the Jedi will resolve the conflict but Palpatine will exploit the situation to get a change in the structure of the government. And so begins his rise to power. Anakin meets the future Mrs. Skywalker. They fall in love.

2nd film — Anakin is an adult, very happy. The Republic seems more prosperous than ever. Materialism has intoxicated people, but it's rotten at the core. Palpatine is manipulating more and more politicians. Kenobi can see what's coming but everyone else seems blind to it. Anakin has become a Jedi "superstar". He's impatient too, but Ben's teaching is slow. Anakin is taken in by Palpatine who promises to teach him faster. Now, at some point, something big must happen to make Anakin want to kill Kenobi and the Jedi Knights. I can only imagine that it will involve Mrs. Skywalker. Perhaps she's unfaithful or Anakin is tricked into believing she is.

3rd film — The Jedi are slaughtered. The political system crumbles. Palpatine moves into power. Anakin and Kenobi battle. Anakin falls in the lava pit. The Emperor learns of Mrs. Skywalker's pregnancy and, in Biblical style, creates havoc and destruction in order to find her. Kenobi helping her escape will be the big action finale.

Epilogue: Anakin becomes Vader. Mrs. Skywalker has twins.

Or — if Lucas is thinking in very commercial terms, he may decide to bring Vader in earlier on.

Maggie Nowakowska: I read that interview with Lucas in *Cinefex* #65. It's interesting that Lucas says SW was 60 or 70 percent of what he wanted it to be. Back on 1977 in *Rolling Stone*, he said it was 25% of what he wanted. I've seen some more stills of Jabba in ANH and he looks wrong. Not the same as the ROTJ one. And all these other FX shots — what's the point in them? What do they add to the film?

Catriona: Welcome back! I do agree with you about

the materialistic side to Lucasfilm. It's the rip-off merchandise I can't stand. All the limited edition stuff that's designed to cause panic buying. We don't have to buy it, of course, but it does tarnish the saga somewhat. May the \$\$\$ be with you.

I never knew Wallace was in *Braveheart*. Was Gromit in it, too?

Tim: You're right, of course. It's never been conclusively established who Yoda meant by "there is another." We can't be positive that he meant Leia. After all, Ben knew about Leia, so why would Yoda need to remind him of her?

Louise Turner: Actually, I thought the artwork on the UK SW videos was okay. I haven't seen the US ones, though. Actually, I'm happy to see artwork of any kind on videos or movie posters these days. It's becoming very much a lost art. At least LFL is making a conscious effort to keep it alive. I just hate the lazy photo montages that are used as movie posters nowadays.

Catriona again: I think you're being a bit unfair to Luke concerning the Gamorrean guards. He didn't kill them. He just throttled them a bit. But on the ground subject of violence in the SW movies, well, it's open to a lot of interpretation. For instance, no other movie hero has ever killed as many people as Luke has and, if Ben could feel the deaths of Alderaan, would Luke feel the deaths of all those on the Death Star?

As for kids today enjoying screen violence, well, I think they always did. Violence on screen is such a hugely complex issue that I'm really not sure there could be any rules made. For instance, who didn't laugh when in *Raiders* Indy shot the Arab swordsman. Now that *was* callous. He could have just wounded him or fought him fairly, but he did it because it was *funny*. It was outrageous. It was a complete surprise because it's not what we expected. We're so well versed in movie conventions that when someone breaks them, it can be very entertaining. No one complained about that scene because it was undeniably funny, so any moral concerns were irrelevant.

Cheree: Well, you've done it again. I don't know how you do it, but you have. *A Tremor in the Force* #9 is another great zine.

Summer Movies: *Eraser*, pretty dull. *Twister*, good, great effects, good characters, not much story though. *Independence Day*... I must admit I was prepared to dislike this after all the hype but it is pretty good. It is very derivative but the story is put together with a lot of skill and those effects sequences are really spectacular. *Mission: Impossible*, okay, but it seemed even more dumb than the TV series.

Thanks to everyone who voted for me in the STAR aWARDs and particularly to Judith for organizing it all.

BEN HAD TO LIE

John Fredericks
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My apologies for the late reply. I had typed a wonderful LoC on my IBM compatible and the hard drive promptly died before I could send it. The company says it is sending us another mother board, but I feel like Jabba waiting for Solo to pay up. Technology; can't live with it, can't shoot it. Liked the pics of your new place and of the MediaWest folks.

Nora: Agree that effects can't improve the story. *ST: The Motion Picture* is a good example of effects which killed a fairly good story.

Z.P.: Thanks for the setting and time for a Lobot story. I'm working on it now. I just need more hours in the day so I could write and sleep from time to time.

Veronica Wilson: You're right. Lucas has a lot to clear up about why Ben lied to Luke and wanted Luke to kill Vader. Of course, George had had *fifteen years* to think up a solution.

Marti Schuller: I appreciated your statement of tolerance concerning the recent "pro" novels. I enjoy fanfic which references them and fanfic which doesn't. What makes good fanfic is good writing and attention to characters, not whether the author liked the Zahn books or not.

Pat Grant: Good luck with your recuperation. I agree that Kenobi could have killed Vader, but instead tried to distract him from Luke's presence. Just because OWK was holed up on Tatooine all those years doesn't mean he wasn't practicing. By the way, how long was OWK on Tatooine? Was he there all the while as Luke was growing up, or was he still actively working for the Rebellion until sometime shortly before ANH. He may have been hiding from the Empire and just waiting to train Luke, but I think he was wily enough to outsmart Vader and sneak some help to the Rebellion at least at the very beginning. Any thoughts? Obviously I have a soft spot for Ben. Look at Luke in ANH and TESB. Ben had to lie. Luke would have gone tearing after Vader and gotten himself turned long before there was any chance of training him. Yes, it was deceitful but is there anyone out there who has never had to tell a white lie?

Glad to hear that you met Bradbury. Wish I had. He's just about my favorite SF writer. I think a lot of an author's personality comes out in their writing. Bradbury's stuff can be critical and pointed without being cynical and jaded (unlike Mr. Ellison who you referenced also). I would have loved to have met Brian Daley.

Matthew Whitney: Glad to know you, fellow educator. No, I don't own any SW ties. My wife only buys me tasteful ties (not that SW ties aren't tasteful) and I never buy my own clothes. If I didn't have family, well, it wouldn't be a pretty sight.

Liked the idea of other beings living on Dagobah. Maybe they were other refugees whom Yoda kept hidden but didn't want to introduce to Luke in case Luke went bad. As for *ST: Voyager*, well, it is getting a little better but it is still missing something for me. I also didn't like the episode where they made Tuvok into a Vulcan agnostic. Vulcans were always depicted as being a highly spiritual people while they made him into a post-modern intellectual. Yeeechhhh.

Marlene Karkoska: I agree. The Black Fleet Crisis books really mischaracterize just about everyone. R2 and Threepio seemed to get the best deal over Luke and Leia and that shouldn't be the case. Leia is tough and not in any way gullible. ("They let us escape." "I don't trust Lando.") Leia deserves better.

Thanks for your comments about Luke having a family.

For the record, I have many friends who are single and lead quite fulfilling lives and applaud their lifestyles. I don't for a minute automatically equate marriage with fulfillment. I do need to say that I am blessed with a wonderful wife. She lets me buy almost all the SW and ST stuff that I want! Well, almost. We do need to eat. In Luke's case, I think he would desire to marry and especially to have children to train in the Force. And he was certainly portrayed as having the same desire for female companionship as any other young man (especially in ANH and TESB. Of course, it was directed at his sister.).

Maggie Nowakowska: Liked the idea of Jedi in other walks of life. Perhaps some of them even gave the order a bad name, which helped Palpatine gain support to hunt them all down. We'd all love to hunt and kill Jedi telemarketers and infomercial producers. Imagine Jedi lawyers. "You don't need to cross-examine the witness." "I don't need to cross-examine the witness." "Move along."

Catriona Campbell: Congrats on finding David. Glad to hear he supports your writing and just happy for you in general.

I'm not sure if Luke really killed those Gamorreans in Jabba's palace. Maybe he just cut off their air until they passed out. Comments?

Tim Blaes: Liked the idea for a cross-over between *Forever Knight/Touched by an Angel*. Maybe the vampires could eat those two angels. I mean, I appreciate the moral tone of the show (a drop of water in TV's utter wasteland) but does it have to be so sappy and sugary? I only saw one episode and couldn't watch another.

SW as epiphany? Couldn't agree more. I sometimes wonder how I would have grown up if I didn't have SW to escape to, and to help inspire me to study science. Maybe I'd be the Maytag guy.

Amen to Diane Duane doing a Leia trilogy.

Gerald Crotty: Thanks for the pics from the Collector's Day. Imagine a fandom so obsessed that they would want to meet an actor whose scene was cut out of the film (Declan Mulholland). Pretty neat. Spooky, but pretty neat.

Debbie Kittle: Really loved the pics with Dave Prowse. Thanks for sending them.

Rich Gawel: I thought "slash" meant violence, too. Guess that's what happens when you grow up in a small town. Another teacher? Great! Weird Al was just here in Pittsburgh and, though I didn't go to the concert, I actually saw him walking with folks in Squirrel Hill (a local neighborhood). Surreal, man.

As for *Shadows*, the novel was good but honestly I can't remember a lot of detail from it. Guess I need to re-read it. The musical score is kind of disjointed for SW. Rendar sucks. Hope he's dead for good. Stupid video game character leaving Lando, Leia and Chewie in the lurch. Hate him!!! Arghhhhh!

Catherine Churko: Best wishes and I'll keep you in my prayers for an eventual return to work. I like Brin, too, but haven't had the time to delve into books other than *Startide Rising*.

Bye for now, folks. Hope I made the deadline. Keep your eyes open...

WHAT A DIFFERENCE!

Cheryl Pryor
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September 19, 1996

Hey, I've been out of it for a little while — are there any, like, rumors floating around about me that I should know about?

Very much enjoyed the new masthead from Art Goddess Nancy Stasulis, as well as her cartoon-of-comment. How come when I say Z. P. looks like Yoda, she threatens to feed me snake stew, but it's okay for everyone else to do it?

Also enjoyed all the photos and news from MediaWest. Sorry Vader's Boudoir was too dark. And in case anyone else wants to know — it was Palpatine's bustier.

After MWC, I got to go to DragonCon in Atlanta. What a difference! In one panel the moderator asked if

anyone read zines — there were about 2 hands! The good news was I got to see the traveling Sansweet presentation as well as hear Mark Hamill speak. Both were lots of fun. Can't wait for next year. I hear they usually get one or two SW guests to drop by.

Nora Mayers: Congrats on the new digs! When do we get to christen it in true Bothan fashion? If we promise not to spray?

Z. P. Florian: Oh, please! You might say you gave up housework for SW (though I know it isn't true — I have to be frisked everytime I leave your house in case some little bauble ends up under my jacket), but you still have time to write, draw, do models, do crafts, do dolls, not to mention the responsibilities of work and family. I think you keep a little green Muse chained in your attic ... okay, I peaked!

And, hey, no polka dot underwear for *my* Sith! Only Palpie gets the kinky stuff.

Veronica Wilson: And here I was thinking, geez, Veronica hasn't written in lately. I'd hoped you were spending your time in saintly pursuits — worshipping His Lordship in prose. Sorry to hear it was more mundane pursuits.

Like your theory that Kenobi sends Luke to Dagobah only when it looks like Dad has a shot at finding him. He doesn't show up until after that probe droid hits Hoth, does he? Maybe that event was the Force afterlife equivalent of a beeper page "gotta run save the boy's butt" kind of thing.

John Fredericks: Ulp — I'm not doing a Luke zine. Probably one of the other Cheryls (our numbers are legion).

Have you seen the new dolls? Their clothes are lovely, not at all like the cheesy polyester of the originals. But who picked "bubble gum blond" as the color for Luke's hair?

A. G. Steyn: Had fun with your SW geography lesson. Since we're sticking to the USA make Cloud City = New York City. Tatooine could be Utah. And Endor, of course, has to be Northern California.

Pat Grant: Fandom and the age factor. I do think the attitude is changing. They aren't marketing SW checks for kids. Or those really expensive prop replicas for the just-getting-out-college crowd. You can tell a lot by how the new products are merchandised. We're seeing fewer "fuzzy as an Ewok" type of things — finally!

Love your idea of a bake sale! Lots of us drive to MWC and could bring goodies that would keep. Sunday night we eat the leftovers — yum!

Marlene Karkoska: Agree completely on *Before the Storm*. Who was that guy and what was he doing calling himself Luke? I did like the Lando bits, though — good to see Lobot back on the scene, even though the whole subplot seems lifted straight from Zahn.

About Vader's destiny — perhaps the Jedi had to be

purged. If the Republic they served was corrupt, perhaps they too needed an overhaul. I know that's not an original idea, but I picture Luke as starting from scratch with the New Order — no records, no convenient Old Jedis, no shimmering ghosts. Without preconceived notions, he could make an order that would better serve the Empire after Palpatine.

Catriona Campbell: Bless David (why do I like saying that so much?) for sending you back. And don't worry; we all have times like that. Just makes the coming home sweeter.

Liz Sharpe: Thanks for the great con report! Did all that stuff really happen? I was, er, distracted most of the day.

Debbie Kittle: Great bit of trick photography! Have you been taking darkroom lessons from Jennifer Moore? Thanks for trying...

Rich Gawel: Welcome! I'd have like to have seen a Lando-struggles-for-acceptance scene in *Shadow*, too. The Rebel Alliance, in the words of a great villain, are "far too trusting."

Louise Turner: Hey! "Anakin's" not a stupid name. It's lovely, it's original. People don't argue short "a" or long "a" over it. And there aren't 47 or so of them running around in fandom like there are Cheryls.

Great to finally meet you at MWC. Mrs. Darth has a nice ring to it, doesn't it?

Catherine Churko: Welcome back! Next step, MediaWest!

Amanda Palumbo: Oooo! Love your idea of Leia's necklace being inherited from her mother. Perhaps a gift from her husband...

Well, that's all for me this time. Thanks to everyone who helped make this summer especially memorable. Hope the rest of the year goes as well.

From the Dark Side...

FIRST LOC

Suzanne Godsalve
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October 3, 1996

Thanks for the first issue of SE which I received last Friday. It gave me something interesting to read on the plane to Edinburgh that evening. As there is a deadline of 7 days after the deadline, I am sending this by email rather than by airmail.

I guess this letter will just be a quick means of saying Hi to everyone out there. I already know Louise Turner and Gerald Crotty and have been exchanging letters with Deb Kittle and Judy Yuenger for a while now, so thought that I would expand my field a bit and get to know other SW fans. This is pretty important as I intend to go to MWC '97 so even if I don't the faces I will know your names.

There was masses of comment in SE, more than I thought could be possible. I have an LOC page in a zine I edit for *Moons of Yavin* but the comments are only ever a few lines long. They never go into such detail as everyone does in SE, exchanging views, giving preferences, what they hate. It is usually a "Yes, I liked that" which can be a bit on the boring side after a while. I suppose it just proves that they do read the issue but maybe I will have to introduce a more controversial topic in the editorial page, possibly start a debate going as to what people think Leia's son Anakin should have been called or whether the name is fine.

I personally think that it is not too inappropriate, after all Han and Leia didn't call him Darth. Anakin was Vader's name before he turned to the Dark Side so maybe Han and Leia saw Anakin as a reflection of Anakin Skywalker's good side. I can see the danger that Anakin Jr. might turn to the Dark Side in the future but that is only might. It is not set in stone that if your name happens to be Anakin then you will automatically be marked as a candidate for the Dark Side. Han and Leia may have taken a chance with choosing Anakin's name but nothing in life is ever certain.

As for the debate on whether Vader knew that he had children. I don't think that he did. It would be impossible for every person to be monitored and Luke living on a Rim world was pretty safe. I also don't think that Luke is a blood relation to the Lars or Ben Kenobi. There have been documented cases where children have been brought up thinking that they are related to someone and later discovered that they were no relation. In a way Owen and Beru adopted Luke as the son they didn't have and they did their best to keep him away from danger. I believe that they knew Luke's real identity, son of Vader, hence their reluctance to let Luke go off to the Academy but they knew that they could not keep him on Tatooine forever. Taking a wild guess, I would say that Owen at least had known the young Anakin and knew what could become of Luke if Ben had taken over his tutorage. Owen had probably grown to love Luke and did not want him hurt, or placed in danger of switching to the Dark Side because he saw Ben as not being the best of Jedi masters.

In the matter of Leia, I cannot see how Vader did not sense the Force within her when she was on the Death Star. An oversight on his part possibly, but I think at that stage

George Lucas had not really thought about possible relationships between anyone other than Luke and Vader.

Away from relationships, I have to agree with Deb Kittle about *Before the Storm*, it was not brilliant. *Shield of Lies* was even worse although I did persevere and read it to the end. This trilogy is turning out to be the worst one written so far. The whole thing doesn't work but I expect that I will buy the final novel just to see what happens. It can only improve, I hope.

The trilogy shows that Kube-McDowell just does not know the SW universe. On the whole, I have enjoyed the pro-novels but this has to be one of the few exceptions. Kube-McDowell has over-reached himself with this ambitious project. It has an alien race which is taking control of one quadrant with Imperial technology and then you have the political intrigue on Coruscant. I was not happy with *Before the Storm* but at least it was not split into three distinct sections as its sequel was. I think that this was the main reason why I hated *Shield of Lies*, too much story division. The first section was Lando's tale, then Luke's and finally Leia's. All that you can guarantee is that come the final installment, everyone will conveniently be in one place.

As for where I was when SW first appeared, I was 8 years old and did not get to see the film until it was on a double bill with TESB. I bought the bubble gum cards, some of which I still have, but that was my only contact with the film. It was not until we moved and changed schools, that I found a copy of the novel in the library and I became hooked. I read the novel over and over again, pestering my parents to let me go and see TESB, which my father did take Caroline and me to. Then, SW and TESB were shown together and off we went, only my sister and I were to see it this time. Caroline left after SW but I stayed on my own to see TESB and enjoyed it all over again. After ROTJ, there was nothing much out there until Zahn's novels started to appear. I could not believe my eyes when *Heir to the Empire* appeared on a shelf. It was totally unexpected and reawakened my love for the trilogy which had gone into hiatus due to lack of material being available. I have been buying the pro-novels and some of the non-fiction guides ever since.

I think that this will be it this time round. Hopefully, I will get more time with the next issue to send a more detailed letter to you, picking up on more of the comments.

Until then, clear skies.



QUESTIONS AND MORE QUESTIONS

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Issue #45 was the first SE I've read in years, so forgive me but I've saved up a lot of questions and "theories." Here goes:

Should Luke marry? There doesn't seem to be a precedent for Jedi celibacy, as Anakin was married (Lucas, in the interview on the widescreen video of ANH, mentions Anakin's "wife", not lover/girlfriend), and obviously, he reproduced. More importantly, the Jedi would be shooting themselves in their collective feet by requiring celibacy, as they need those whose families are strong in the Force, like the Skywalkers — and not permitting those who have strong Force abilities to reproduce would greatly diminish the future of the Jedi. As the "last of the Jedi", Luke almost has an *obligation* to reproduce (any volunteers, girls?) :) After all, Leia and Han can't repopulate the entire Jedi order, much as Han might like to try.

On the other hand, Ben and Yoda don't seem to have reproduced or even married. It's possible that the Jedi were like the celibate Shakers, who adopted and raised orphans in the Shaker traditions, but gave them the choice when they reached 18 years of age to stay or go. Not enough of them chose to stay, as history shows us; in this case, the Empire could've waited until the celibate Jedi order died out of its own accord, without bothering to wipe them out and risk making martyrs of them.

But let's go back a step. What would the purpose of celibacy be? I believe that modern religious celibates choose this way of life as a means of becoming close to God/spirituality/? through a transcendence of the material/physical world. We've heard Yoda say "Luminous beings are we. Not this crude matter [flesh]." So a case could be made for this. However, OWK also tells us that the Force, which of course is the central idea in the Jedi religion, is "an energy field, made up of all living things." Yoda adds, "Life creates it. Makes it grow. Its energy surrounds us and bind us." Now, what would be the point of trying to transcend a Force that is *created* by life? The Force is life, and life is the Force. I don't see anything in this philosophy that suggests the necessity of non-attachment to the physical world. There is no God to be got at behind the material world, no Nirvana to be attained.

In other words, I agree that Luke should "get some." :)

On the question of whether Jedi are also doctors, scientists, politicians, and what have you: why not? But if not, there's no reason they couldn't have oblates. I recently read a non-fiction book by Kathleen Norris called *Dakota*, in which Norris talks about such a relationship she has with a Catholic monastery. After all, modern religions tend to have stratification: why can't the Jedi have celibate monastics *and* laypersons dedicated to their philosophy? Perhaps only those who wish to become "Masters" would be required to remain celibate? That would explain Yoda and Ben.

About Anakin and Ben: what is the time frame of Anakin's training/fall? When Obi-Wan meets Anakin, A. is a pilot in the Clone Wars. Is he married already? Ben "took it upon himself" to train A., but how long did it take? Presumably A. (unknowingly?) impregnated his wife before he turned to the Dark Side and presumably Mrs. Skywalker was hidden away before it became obvious to Anakin that she was carrying his children. Can we presume it took OWK less than 9 months to train Anakin? (We don't after all know the gestation period for these humanoids.) I'm guessing he didn't marry in the middle of his training? And, is it at all possible that OWK attempted to train Anakin himself because Yoda said A. was "too old"? Or perhaps "too married"? After all, A. probably wasn't much older than Luke was in TESB, and he didn't have the distinction of being the "penultimate hope" that his son did...

Also, had the Jedi purges already started when Anakin turned? Did he know in advance that he would have to help destroy the entire order? Oh, for the next trilogy to start...

I've read a lot of talk about Ben lying to Luke, but what about Owen? Owen says "[Obi-Wan] died about the same time as your father." Well, he sure as heck knows that's not true; brother or not, we know he's communicated with Ben, as Ben says of Anakin's lightsaber, "Your uncle didn't want you to have it." I interpret that to mean Ben *asked* him about it! And why does Owen, to Luke, call Ben a "wizard"? Is there talk on Tatooine of Ben having "powers"? Or of being a Jedi? Surely Owen would not want Luke to know about Ben being a Jedi, lest he follow him on "some damn fool idealistic crusade". Furthermore, Luke asks Ben how his father died; what did the Lars' tell him? Didn't Luke wonder how Owen knew that Obi-Wan and Anakin had "died about the same time" and not know how?

Whitney: I was intrigued by your questioning of why Obi-Wan would present Anakin's saber to his son and not his twin. OWK knew of Leia's existence and Leia of his — she even knows OWK is also called "Ben", because Luke tells her he's come with "Ben Kenobi" and she shows no surprise. Anyway, surely Bail wouldn't have objected

to Leia's training, as Owen appears to have done. She was already a Rebel and in danger; Jedi training could only have helped. Did Ben ever try, as he did with Owen, or did he have no intention of ever training Leia?

Karkoska: I disagree that Ben's being a friend of Luke's father was the *most* powerful reason for Luke's following him, though that certainly helped things along. I think Luke was willing to listen to and follow Ben because he was *bored* and primed for adventure. He was more than ready to get off Tatooine, having begged the Lars' to let him join the Academy. And in Kenobi's defense, everybody, he couldn't very well tell the kid that his father was Darth Vader at that point. Luke's had 19 years to create life histories of his father and I bet none of them included his being a "master of evil." I think Ben told Luke about Vader killing Anakin to soften the inevitable blow; it's like the old story of the cat falling off the roof: you have to tell the guy his cat was *on* the roof first. Luke didn't even know his father was a Jedi, much less that he had "turned". And what would the fact that his father had turned to the Dark Side mean to a kid who didn't know what the Force was, much less what the Dark Side of it was?

And this begs another question: what do the "common people" know about the Jedi, who have been nearly extinct for 20 years? Han calls it a "hokey religion" and that Imperial, Motti, chides Vader for his "sad devotion to that ancient religion." A Jedi can't get no respect in this era. Later when Vader says, "This will be a day long remembered. It has seen the end of Kenobi...", it sounds as if the Lord of the Sith is having delusions of grandeur; Luke and Han had never even heard of Kenobi, after all!

My C3PO questionnaire: Do any of the cartoons, comics, etc., explain why 3PO has one silver leg? I'm also curious about his "eyes"/photoreceptors. In ANH, they remain dark while he's outside in sunlight and lit when he's inside. In TESB and ROTJ, however, they're lit constantly, unless he is turned off (as by Leia) or blown apart (as by a stormtrooper). In fact, when Chewie's putting him back together in TESB, he whines about not being able to see — until Chewie switches the light on. Why the discrepancy? And while I'm on the subject of 3PO, why does he need to know how to drive? He drives Luke's landspeeder across the Jundland Wastes; and how does one steer a landspeeder, anyway? And while I'm on a roll, does anyone believe 3PO is sentient? He's certainly self-aware, even self-obsessed! :) He expresses emotion, friendship, etc., and he's obviously intelligent. Any takers? I'm also curious as to why in TESB, he calls Chewbacca "Chewie" as they're fleeing Cloud City ("Oh, no, Chewie, they're behind you!"). I know, I'm nitpicking, but from such an unfailingly formal droid, it sounds out of place. ((Ed: He also tells R2 that "we're trying to rescue

HAN [short a, like Lando pronounced it] from the bounty hunter.”)) Also, how is it that the stormtrooper blast in TESB conveniently blows him precisely into his component parts rather than making a hole in his chest or melting him utterly? And my final note on Threepio: how does he pick R2 off of Luke’s landspeeder outside the Mos Eisley Cantina? Look closely at this scene: Ben and Luke are conversing, not moving; we know (?) R2 can’t get off by himself, so that leaves 3PO to get R2 out! I lied. One more: in TESB on the asteroid, Han tells Chewie to shut down all non-essential power systems on the *Falcon*. Why does 3PO ask if he needs to be shut down? He has an independent power source, hasn’t he?

Who runs this Academy that Luke wants to follow Biggs into? It sounds Imperial — in the *Premiere* script, Biggs says, “I’m not waiting for the Empire to draft me into service.” If Luke “hates” the Empire as he says he does, why would he want to join an Academy that leads to service in the Empire? And does Owen not want Luke to enlist there because he’s afraid Luke will turn Imperial?

Crotty: I agree; Chewie certainly did deserve a medal! It’s always bugged me that he didn’t get one.

Steyn: I loved your explanation of why Luke wears black! Thank you! It makes a lot of sense.

For the “Stormtroopers aren’t too bright, are they?” file: in ANH, when the stormtroopers land on Tatooine to look for the escape pod, Trooper #1 says, “Someone was in the pod. The tracks go off in this direction.” Trooper #2 holds up a metal ring and says, “Look, sir, droids.” Couldn’t they already tell that the tracks were made by droids and not humanoids?

Luke, speaking sarcastically of Tatooine, wishes for someone to “teleport me off this rock.” But we’ve never seen anyone teleport in the SW universe. Has Luke been watching too much *Star Trek* again?

What’s the deal with the Alliance flight helmets? Luke, a member of the “red team” in ANH, has a helmet with a red Rebel insignia on it — that makes perfect sense. But look at the other designs! They’re quite original: do the veteran pilots paint on their own designs? It might make an interesting zine story to explore what each design means to the pilot who painted it.

In ANH, in the Rebel briefing room, Luke boasts of killing womprats in his T-16 back home. Am I right in assuming a T-16 is a kind of plane? Then what’s a poor farmboy doing owning a plane?

What is Luke mouthing to himself after he destroyed the Death Star? Enquiring minds want to know...

C3PO tells Han his ship “has a most peculiar dialect.” Ships have dialects? Likewise, 3PO says the Ewoks are using a “very primitive dialect”. A very primitive dialect of what?

In TESB, the Emperor tells Vader of Luke, “We have

a new enemy...” So, whenever it was that Vader realized who Luke was, he must’ve kept it secret from the Emp. This argues (to me, anyway) that Vader “felt” Luke in the Force, because Imperial spies would’ve told Palpatine anything they told Vader, lest they risk the wrath of ol’ yellow eyes. Though it’s highly improbable, I submit to you the possibility that Vader complied in keeping Luke hidden from the Emperor, at least until he was old enough to be turned to the Dark Side. It’s a stretch, I know, but it would follow that OWK didn’t bother to change Luke’s name because he knew Vader wouldn’t be interested in Luke until he’d had some Jedi training.

Why does Yoda refer to Luke’s “failure” at the cave? What would the result have been if Luke had “succeeded”?

What is Lobot? Is he a very human-looking droid? Or is he like a Borg, a humanoid with computer implants?

How does Jabba know that Luke specifically would be coming to rescue Han and Chewie? He told Bib F. not to let “him” in, remember?

This falls into the “my TV is too small” category: In ROTJ, in the briefing room, is that a command insignia on Leia’s vest? Does she have a rank besides “Princess”?

Gawel: X and SW, huh? Some character similarities to chew on: #1: Deep Throat/Ben. DT, a former friend of Mulder’s dad, helps M in his quest, but also misleads him, telling him only parts of the truth. DT also dies so that M can continue his quest. #2: Cigarette Smoking Man/Vader. I haven’t seen the season premiere yet, but the horrible possibility that CSM could be M’s dad looms large. Anyway, CSM, like Vader, is a “(federal) agent of evil,” working for an Empire-like organization and believing that he is “keeping order.” And they’re both heavy breathers. #3: Mulder/Luke. Like you said. Plus, they both need to find out about their fathers in order to get the key to their own self-discovery. #4: Scully/Han. The skeptic, who nonetheless believes in her/his friend, if not in “little green men”/“hokey religions” and aids in his quest. #5: C3PO & R2/Lone Gunmen. Supply information, technology, and humor. I see a lot of possibilities in this subject...

Why would Jabba want Leia as his slavegirl? Perhaps this is too indelicate of me to bring up, but I will anyway: He can’t have sex with her, can he? I had an ominous thought when I rewatched ROTJ last night: Jabba licks Leia, as you all remember — could he be planning to eat her for dinner?? Either way, it’s a grim prospect.

Do Wedge’s friends call him Wedgie?

Good night, Gracie...



SILLY PUTTY

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Did anyone catch the episode of *Friends* concerning Ross' ROTJ fantasy?

Some of you might be interested in this year's Eisner Awards, issued each year at the San Diego Comic Convention. The winner for Best Short Story was "The Eltingville Comic-Book, Science-Fiction, Fantasy, Horror, and Role-Playing Club in Bring Me the Head of Boba Fett" in *Instant Piano* #3. Regretably, I haven't seen this comic.

Nora Mayers: I'm at a loss to explain how or in what way, but my expectations are very different regarding fanzines and pro novels. Well, maybe I can explain one thing; I can read and enjoy radically different takes on the characters and world in a zine. But I might freak if a pro novel tried to pull some of the wild stuff I've seen in zines. Fanzines are like Silly Putty. I expect pro novels to be somewhat firmer.

Z. P. Florian: I hope you did try again with West End and were able to get your foot in the door.

But what about us poor slobs who haven't seen *Frantic* or the Lybarger cartoon? It looked like Han was doing something weird with that Ewok.

Veronica Wilson: Well, I think we *do* need myths to live by, stories to give as moral examples to children, and even patriotism and a sense of one's own society's basic goodness. George Washington wasn't the sort of person I'd advise to let do your taxes, but it isn't a stretch to consider him a hero. A WWII ace whose name escapes me once said, "Show me a hero and I'll prove to you he's a bum. Show me a bum and I'll prove to you he's a hero." Our media seem to worship the anti-hero nowadays.

John Fredericks: The Tyers interview was from *Overstreet's Fan* #5, October 1995. It was my first issue, won in a drawing at the local comics shop. I consider this an excellent magazine that covers a broad range of media (there is a regular *SW Futures* column that covers the latest products and publications) but it's coverage of comics I find particularly informative.

Eric Shanower did a series of graphic novels about Oz in the mid-80's. They were very enjoyable and true to the spirit of Baum, but besides Shanower's own characters, they were *always* about Dorothy and the Scarecrow. He just didn't seem inclined to do anything with the rest of the cast, which is a shame. Shanower is the editor of *Oz Story* magazine, a bi-annual publication filled with old and new Oz fiction and Baum-related stuff.

I've often fantasized What If most of civilization were

to be wiped out, but my belongings miraculously were preserved from the holocaust. All my books and magazines, but especially my zines and filk tapes. What would they make of such things, especially if the movies and TV shows the zines were based on didn't survive? What (mis)conceptions might they reach from my typical (heh heh) possessions? ((Ed: Ever read *A Canticle for Leibowitz*??))

Marti Schuller: I've never had any problem with Han in ROTJ. Perhaps because I'm a guy, I never completely bought into the image Han was projecting in ANH. The near death of carbon freeze and "the love of a good woman" are bound to change a man. I don't give a damn about him snapping that stupid twig! Could happen to anybody.

A. G. Steyn: Someone asked if there was going to be an official SW convention in *SW Galaxy Magazine* #8. The response was, "There was talk of an official *Star Wars* convention but the folks at Lucasfilm have decided to hold off since there is so much *Star Wars* activity happening at fan conventions already." What I heard, however, was that the prospective convention organizers couldn't come to a business agreement with Lucasfilm. Money is the reason there will be no 20th Anniversary SW Con.

Because of the presence of fog, and because Han and Leia could exit the *Falcon* without pressure suits, I assumed there must be some sort of atmosphere on the asteroid (or at least inside the space slug's gut). Yeah, I know George has sound in space, but until he clearly refutes a law of the universe, I'm going to assume they're still in action.

If Coruscant is completely covered with buildings, how does it replenish its oxygen without plant life? Yeah, one-note planets are unimaginative. Sure, it's plausible for a planet to be all desert or ice-locked, but weather systems and ecology on an all-plains or all-swamp world sounds precariously delicate to me. I do seem to remember seeing significant amounts of blue on Dagobah, so it probably has oceans, and I also remember seeing storyboards/pre-production artwork of Yoda among hilly plains covered with huge mushrooms.

If Leia had been sent to Tatooine instead of Luke, I wonder how she would have gotten along with Camie? Or Biggs?

Pat Grant: Your *Highlander* RPG sounds intriguing. If you're thinking of running a game next MWC, I'm interested. Do you think it could be expanded to include other compatible fandoms? Are there any player characters besides Immortals or Watchers? Any room for maverick FBI agents, intrepid tabloid reporters, or sword swinging Warrior Nuns?

Harlan Ellison had a severe heart attack not long ago necessitating quadruple bypass surgery, so I feel obligated

to say a few words in defense of the bastard. I've some idea why you dislike Ellison. He's kicked a few of my Sacred Cows (which will remain anonymous but for their initials, SW and ST). Being in the same room with a neutron bomb with a big red button that says "push me" might be less dangerous than disagreeing with him. But he is a wonderful writer and the world would be a lot less interesting without him.

As for David Gerrold, Cheree may be right about him. Years back, a friend of mine spotted him in the lobby of a hotel at the end of a con and asked him, "Excuse me, I know you have something to do with *Star Trek*, but I can't quite remember your name." Gerrold identified himself as Harlan Ellison. "I know who Harlan Ellison is and you're not him. I'm sorry I can't remember your name, but I would like to know who you are." Gerrold still insisted he was Ellison. Twisted, huh?

I hope you get that Oz/SW play finished in time for next MWC and I want a part in it!

Yes, I knew about the Dark Horse adaption of *Splinter*. Their way of fixing it was to simply *ignore* the klunky parts. As for my writing any sort of sequel, I might try a vignette or short story, but not until I've finished a few other things.

Matthew Whitney: I wonder if there are any haunted lightsabers? Most of the last generation of Jedi met violent ends and their souls might latch onto their weapon. I remember a neat old issue of *Marvel Team-Up*; Spiderman was getting his clock cleaned by the spirit of an ancient wizard that had been accidentally awakened one night in a museum. Mary Jane Watson was also on the scene, her attention drawn away from the battle to a strangely glowing sword, a sword that compelled her to pick it up from its smashed display case. Next thing you know, Spidy has Red Sonja lending much needed assistance! If a Force sensitive were to pick up the right (or wrong) lightsaber, a similar meld/possession might take place. Who knows how many lightsabers are out there, in private collections (Vader's?) or museums.

I suspect that Leia might not even allow herself emotional relief in a moment of privacy. The stress and grief she must have bottled up must be incredible, and it *will* come out eventually, whether she lets it out herself or not. Anything could trigger a catharsis — a song, a familiar face, the sight of an animal native to Alderaan. The release might not necessarily be tears or hysterics, either. I'd just hope she'd be with friends and out of the public eye when it happens.

The primary payoff for me in a *SW/Voyager* crossover would be Leia telling Janeway where she can insert her Prime Directive.

My regret is that I can't always give every LoCer some sort of response. But just saying "I agree/disagree with

you" or "Your comments were very interesting" seem unsatisfying.

Marlene Karkoska: It could be that Anakin's fall to the Dark won't be the only story of the first trilogy and we may find emotional payoffs in other characters and plot-lines.

Somehow, the idea of Anakin playing "Topper" to his grandkids just doesn't appeal to me.

Yeah, I'm full of ideas. But I'm also a very slow writer and pulling and stretching and beating an idea into an actual story doesn't come to be that easily. So, lazy bum that I am, I toss them out and hope they grow in someone else's mind. For example: The exact cause of multiple personality syndrome is unknown (though it could be linked to childhood trauma) but what if there was a drug that could *induce* it? Spike the punchbowl and the entire Rebel Alliance/New Republic leadership could become ... somebody else. Developing the full implications of this idea is not something I'm up to right now. It would probably make a better RPG scenario than fanfic, anyway. But too late for that now. Oh, and what if they dripped it into the Imperials' punchbowl? Darth could think he's an opera singer.

Catriona Campbell: If you liked *Truce at Bakura*, you'll probably like *Children of the Jedi*. I may be in the minority, but I've enjoyed the *Young Jedi Series* by Anderson & Moesta (soon to be collected in one volume by the SF Book Club) even though I do have some bones to pick with them. At times they make the mistake of talking down to the "young adult" audience. I get tired of constantly being retold things, such as Jaina and Jacen's eyes being "brandy brown." "Blaster bolts!" is a really lame expletive. And I dislike stupid and obnoxious characters like Raynar, who exist only to make lead characters look good.

The Imperials killed Luke's family, imprisoned and scheduled for termination a woman he has the hots for (even though they haven't met yet) and all and all acted in a rude manner. Things like that can lessen one's sensitivity to violence. And I was under the impression that Luke only gagged the Gamorrean guards a little so they'd get out of his way. I really don't think he killed them.

And by the way, welcome back. When are you going to send me "May the Force Be With Q"?

Gerold Crotty: I was under the assumption that Coruscant didn't fall immediately into Rebel Alliance control, so celebrations right after the Emperor's death seem odd. And how would they know it happened so soon? Was there an Eye Witness News crew in orbit with the DS2 taking live pictures? I don't buy it.

Your reaction to *The Essential Guide to SW Characters* is much the same as mine. I wish I hadn't bought it. Lucasfilm may have dropped the policy of making a

distinction between canon and non-canon material because maybe *they* can't tell anymore. If the books remain consistent, they take on an authority of their own (despite the fact that George could up and say it's all wrong at any time). But how would we feel if there was *no* continuity between any of the novels and comics? It's a "catch-22" for both us and Lucasfilm.

Nowhere Man/The Prisoner? Ooo, that's a good one. How about this: at the request of Phoebe Green, Scully and Mulder investigate sheep mutilations in the UK. Whatever the true nature of the trouble (naughty UFO's, Cthuluesque horrors, or the local chapter of Conspiracys-R-Us), they really step in it, and only a little pig named Babe can pull their bacon out of the fire.

Rich Gawel: There have been a few times when I've had to try and explain fandom/fanzines to family or acquaintances and I worry if I should try to explain "slash". I don't think I ever have to anyone mundane, but one friend and contributor to my zine, who I finally talked into coming to a MediaWest, got an eyeful in the dealer's room and hasn't been back again.

Unless I totally slack off, I'll get back to you about some ideas for a round robin. Do you think you could get your English class interested in something like that? Perhaps you could get them to do a zine as a class project.

I know one thing both SW and *X-Files* have in common — a GBG (Great Babe of the Galaxy). Some may object to the term "babe" but I assure you, there are no bimbos among the GBG.

Louise Turner: Regarding lil' Anakin, we have two choices. Either we ignore the character or we find some justification for Leia giving him that name. Though I don't consider it beyond possibility, even I would like to know how Leia came to accept her parentage and decide to name him after Anakin. The Fox network is chewing at Lucas' heels to do a Young Jedi Knights series for them, so Jacen, Jaina and lil' Anakin inch closer to "canon". (Maybe Han wanted the kid named after an old uncle of his? No telling how common the name is.)

Metaphors be with you...



JOHN WILLIAMS & BOSTON POPS

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September 23, 1996

Hopefully all of you out there had a fun summer and that you are all looking forward to a peaceful autumn. I would also like to congratulate everyone who won STAR aWARDs, with special congrats to Cheree on the new house and to Catriona Campbell on her engagement. And, best wishes and a speedy recovery to Pat Grant and Catherine Churko. Hope you're feeling better soon!

As for myself, summer wound itself down rather peacefully. I spent a weekend in Massachusetts and enjoyed the honor of seeing John Williams conduct the Boston Pops live at the Great Woods Amphitheater. All of my concert experiences seem to be SW related, right? Anyway, it was a wonderful evening of film music, with Mr. Williams conducting both his own pieces and his favorites by other composers. The set included *Fiddler on the Roof* (killer violin solo), *Schindler's List* (very moving), *Jurassic Park* (very underrated), and the show closer, *Star Wars*. It was almost anticlimactic since I've played the soundtrack a million times, but it was nonetheless brilliant. Also, he performed a medley of his "hits", including *E.T.*, *Raiders*, *Jaws*, and *SW*, accompanied by film clips on a giant video screen. He did this to demonstrate how a good film score can really add suspense and drama to a film (he played a clip of *Jaws* without and then again with the music and the difference was remarkable!). Mr. Williams is truly a genius and today's movies are infinitely better because of his work.

On to the commentary. I noticed that most letters ask things like "Why does Ben wait so long to send Luke to Dagobah?" or "Why does Han change so much in ROTJ?" Everyone has great, thought-provoking answers, placing themselves in the points of view of these characters and figuring out the personal motivations. Maybe I've been an English major too long, but I tend to look for other abstract, symbolic reasons behind these things. For example, Ben's decision can be mapped against the mythic patterns established by Joseph Campbell and researched by Lucas. According to Campbell, the hero must orient himself within a society, that is, figure out his external roles and mature as an adult, before he can begin the internal journey of self-discovery. In other words, he had to grow up a bit before he would have been able to tangle with that dark mess called the unconscious mind. The farmboy from ANH wouldn't have been able to confront

the dark without firm roots in the light; he wasn't even quite ready in TESB, but Ben and Yoda weren't counting on him leaving early. His three years of work with the rebels prior to TESB gave him some kind of foundation, though, maybe enough to have resisted Vader's temptations during the duel. It's not a perfect match, but Lucas was careful to follow Campbell's patterns, and these patterns can help decode a lot of what happens in the trilogy.

Okay, I'll get off the lecture podium now. On to specific letters.

Z. P.: I also remember this rumor of Harrison Ford wanting to kill Han off, but that would have countered Lucas' general theme of character growth, redemption and integration into society. Still, it would make an interesting alternate-ROTJ. How would Han have died? Eaten up by the Ewoks? Stepped on by a scout walker? Perhaps during the "I love you/I know" reversal at the bunker door, Leia could have missed, the stormtrooper shoots back, Han dives in front to save her, and gets hit instead. That might work, since Han would still be giving up his life, this time literally, to society. It would be a progression from the mercenary who rescued Leia "only for the money" to someone who sacrifices himself for someone he loves. Any other possibilities?

Veronica: Hey, a fellow New Brunswickian! Are you a Scarlet Knight, too? Go RU! I totally agree with your extensive comments about the Jedi and society's need to mythologize itself. Paradoxically, these fictional myths are what give a society its legitimacy. Everyone in a society can believe in this common, glorious (though debatable) past and take comfort in the fact that whatever goes on today *must* be okay, since it has roots in the great stuff of so long ago. Every culture in our world does it. Naturally, the Old Republic would, too.

John: Your comments about your students are, unfortunately, too easy to relate to; "can't think their way out of a paper bag." How can teachers teach something, like thinking, that is primarily intuitive? It's the biggest educational challenge of all. Anyway, Bradbury has always been a favorite of mine and even a couple of my staunchest non-reading students enjoyed *Fahrenheit 451*. Hopefully, they looked past the cool action and saw the real message, the value of books. As for fanfic about minor characters, I definitely accept your challenge. It would add *depth* to the universe. In fact, I like taking minor characters and creating my own backgrounds for them. There's so much more room for creativity than with the "Big 3." Lando, for example, has lots of potential for this. Call me crazy, but I loved the Neil Smith books. They had this subversive, libertarian, screw-the-bureaucracy tone that was quite refreshing.

A. G. Steyn: Here's a tidbit for you and all the other

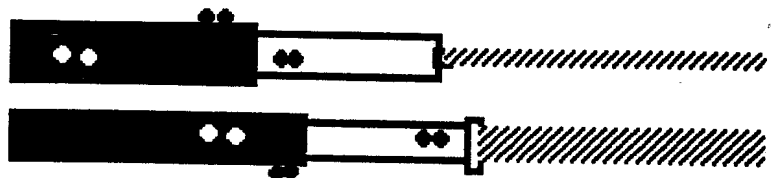
Ford fans out there. The local drive-time radio show did a call-in piece called "Peeing with the Celebrities." Callers related anecdotes about sharing bathrooms with famous people. Well, one caller stood next to Harrison's urinal back when they filmed *Working Girl* in the caller's office building. And, the caller said, Harrison doesn't "wiggle" when he's done; he "taps" it. Yes, it's gross and meaningless, but I couldn't resist. ((Ed: Gee, thanks, Rich. I'm sure that we're all better people for having learned that little piece of info.))

Pat Grant: I'm a fan of the *Highlander* TV show, too, and my sister is a recent convert as well. She caught a scene of Adrian Paul doing karate while shirtless and has been hooked ever since. (She even taped his Victoria's Secret commercial!) And, how about an obscure Gene Kelly reference? At least, I hope I'm not mixing him up with someone else. Didn't he play Starbuck's dad in an episode of everyone's favorite SW ripoff, *Battlestar Galatica*? He was a con man on the run from a bunch of bad guys he double-crossed. Yes, definitely very Han Solo like, very charming, witty, and able to project innocence when he's far from it! ((Ed: I think that was *Fred Astaire*..))

Matt Whitney: Hello to another fellow teacher! I'll have to see if the dress code at the Catholic school I teach at allows SW ties, though I do have a poster from the Topps Galaxy series on my bulletin board, along with a picture of Vader. It's the classic shot of him pointing at the camera in ROTJ. I added a word balloon saying "Don't forget..." and posted it next to where I write their homework assignments on the blackboard.

Gerald Crotty: An *X-Files/Kolchak* crossover? Chris Carter has looked into this but there are all kinds of logistical and copyright complications to sift through before it gets done. It would be great, though. Mulder could be a fan of his work and finally get to meet him as they team up to investigate something. Scully's reactions would be priceless as she watches these two kindred spirits feed off each other's enthusiasm. And, it would be fun to see Darren McGavin again (his personality really carried that show!).

I'm sure I've rambled on long enough. Poor Cheree now has to type all this up! But, one more thing before I go; I've been collecting the Topps Finest cards and, despite lots of doubles, I'm nowhere near a full set. If anyone has any to trade, please contact me at the address above.



SW SHOPPING SERVICE

Debbie Kittle
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September 26, 1996

I must say that 1996 has been the best year for me when it comes to the weather. Not only do I get several Hoth blizzards but my summer is the coolest since 1946!!! No temps over 100 at all! And just a few 90 + days but mostly 70 and 80's. Someone must really love me! I can only hope 1997 is colder and snowier! Pray with me now....!

The new Hallmark Christmas *Millennium Falcon* ornament is out and it is beautiful. Can't believe Christmas is right around the corner. Lots of stuff coming out. For us collectors out there it's flood time!

I saw the Sansweet SW presentation and loved it. And right after that, Mary Jo Fox and I went to the IMAX theater and saw the film "Special Effects" which has SW footage. It blew us away. They refilmed the opening sequence of ANH for the new screen and it was breathtaking. I urge everyone to try and see it.

Nora: It's all my fault! Blame me for the snow please! Hope your new digs are working for you.

Z.P.: Interesting response to your WEG submissions. Agree with your thoughts on MW — well put.

Veronica: Welcome back!

John: Smiling Dead Bothans? That's a scary thought. Actually, it's very hard to get them to pose at all. I think they're tired of all the exposure.

I see Luke and Leia telling the top brass everything or most everything depending on time constraint. Their first priority was planning Han's rescue and since he was paired with Chewie, Lando knew he couldn't even think of any double-cross. Besides, Lando got stung very badly by the Empire — all the promises made by DV meant zilch so he had nothing to lose. Certainly the Alliance would treat him better than the Empire any day of the week.

After Han's rescue and recovery, I can see Leia, Chewie and Han discussing Lando's actions (I think Han knew about the Battle of Tanaab. Perhaps that's where they first met) and offered him a position which he accepted to give back to the Empire that which he was given by them.

A.G.: We ran out of room and people for the 1996 doll show so Han's cabin couldn't be included in that one. We're gonna try for "Back To Bespin" in 1997 actually and I'm going for the entire carbon freeze chamber!

We always take you seriously or at least I do :)!

Never enough snow for me, thanks!

Pat: Good to see you up and about at MW. TRU stands for Toys R Us. The 3-D MF puzzle is there in abundance. If you still need help with getting it when this reaches you, please contact me and I'll help you out.

Deb's Buying Service and Deb's Shopping Network is available in the USA and overseas...

Per your response to Matthew: OWK couldn't just kill DV and be done with it. That could amount to him going to the Dark Side. Besides, I agree that OWK used his "death" to keep Luke and DV separated.

Agree with your Harlan comments. I've never met him (I don't want to!) but watch him on the Sci Fi Buzz show on the Sci Fi Channel. He is everything you said and more.

Matthew: The 3-D MF puzzle is very gorgeous and a ton of hard work but worth it as is the Steel Tec MF. I just put my MF together and it was very frustrating in parts but it is beautiful.

No, you did mention the calendar but there is also a Hallmark puzzle that is very nice. Did you get the ESB Hallmark calendar?

Maggie: I enjoyed reading Lucas's comments regarding his rework of the Trilogy. However, I have to agree. I'm a perfectionist at heart and everything has to be done a certain way. I'd like to go back and change a few of my early stories now that I have some experience under my belt. And I plan (when time allows) to re-sew some of my early doll clothes that aren't quite as nice as I know I could make them now.

Just think that if George had had a few major hits by 1976, the studio would probably have given him the budget he wanted (and added from his own funds as he has done), the SW we'll see next year would be the one that we'll have talked about for the past 20 years.

Besides, I'm just *so* looking forward to seeing the Trilogy on the big screen — it's been so long (yeah, Liz, I know we saw it in 1994 but one showing is not enough) and since I only saw ANH that once on the big screen, I have to make up for lost time!

Minky: So, are you gonna kill me?

Treena: Howdy and welcome home! Congrats on the engagement and the happiness you've seem to have found. I'm looking forward to reading more of your stories.

I don't think Luke killed those G. Guards in ROTJ. Yes, they blocked his path and he gave them a little choke so they'd move out of his way but I see him rendering them unconscious only.

Gerald: Great photos from the Con!

Liz: The con description you gave was great. I'd forgotten half the stuff they talked about as I was working on getting my photos.

Rich: Hello and welcome.

Wedgie Sue: Hiya! You *hate* your video art and love ours?!? Let's trade! Yeah, but you love that Breyer horse, don't you?!?

Glad you enjoyed shopping so much. I love to watch others plunk down a lot of \$\$ — it gives me a warm feeling inside! Besides, I shop for 1/2 of fandom, so it's nice to see others do it for a change.

Catherine: Glad to hear you're improving. Here's a wave back.

Amanda: I absolutely loved seeing Han on the cereal box as well as other SW stuff on those other cereal boxes.

Nancy: Loved your cartoon. However, I still missed you LoC.

Cheree: Thanks for printing the photos I sent. They came out well but I think a few people I know may try to kill me. That's all right since I'm already dead.

I hope everyone has a great rest of the year and a lovely Holiday Season. Fly Casually In The Force!

MYTHICAL ARCHETYPES

Maggie Nowakowska
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October 4, 1996

Oh oh, it's the end of September, er, the beginning of October. Time to get the SE LoC in.

First off, a great big thanks to everyone with offers of help and ideas for the 50th issue of SE. I'm mulling over the possibilities of auctions, flagrant donation spiels, etc. Are there any zines out there that folks think would make good silent auction items? Any donations possible from folks? Ms. Steyn, might there be something very interesting and very European in SW reaction or outlook that could be gotten either for an auction or sale now, or for inclusion in the special issue? I was thinking of seeing if I could run off a special edition copy of *JediStarDarkFalconKnight*; would that inspire any bidders? I'm guessing for the issue sometime in '98, right Cheree? (Ed: *I figured out that it should be due in Spring '98, so how about planning the 50th Issue for MediaWest '98?*)

Folks, please write to me directly!

Hmmm. From Judy Yuenger's report on MWC16, it sounds like I missed some good SW panels in Michigan; either that, or I missed a chance to get into trouble, especially with the OWK panel. Well, I'll be looking forward to similar interesting panels next year!

Welcome back to Veronica Wilson! Good to hear from

you again. That was a good letter, too. Thank you for your thoughtful words on the various topics that have filled our letters recently. Your points about the difference between the message and the institution are well-taken. Another point to consider in these discussions is the sort of assumptions we bring to the talk. Do we view history in a linear fashion or as a more cyclical series of events? Do we view actions in moral terms (good/bad with appropriate consequences) or do we see cause and effect in less dramatic terms?

John Fredericks: I tend to agree with the idea that the rebellion is just chock full of people with pasts that don't bear much investigation, and therefore Lando would probably shine as a beacon of responsibility amidst the mob. After all, the rebellion took in Han who had far less substantial credentials than Lando who has stood the test of civic responsibility. Rieeken's casualness about the price on Han's head in TESB would seem to be an adequate marker of Alliance tolerance and awareness of the real world. Practical people, these.

Marti Schuller: No, no. Obi-wan becomes Gandalf as a penance! Hmm, or maybe rather Merlin and when that doesn't quite work out either, The Powers That Be put him on ice for a few centuries or more...

A. G. Steyn: I suspect the reason for the plain looks Imperials/good looks rebels is the fairy tale basis for the SW story. In archetypal tales, visuals are used to convey judgments, attitudes, etc., to a great extent. A person who acts ugly is physically ugly; a scary person is depicted as a scary monster or ferocious animal. A very good person is ethereal. It's a specific vocabulary that seems to work very well with children and in that specific genre, sort of a visual emphasis. Since the SW story is founded in so many other aspects of myth and archetypes, it stands to reason that it would meet the visual requirements as well. Hey, you even see it on TV daily where someone who is playing a sexual role has to be perfectly beautiful, despite the fact that in real life very ordinary people are sexual: the TV role must symbolize sex physically as well as represent it in action and word.

Hmmm, well, actually, the way I heard it in dojo was that the black belt is actually fairly easy to obtain (at least compared to the difficulty presented by stories such as your letter quoted). What was difficult to obtain was the return of the white belt by having worked at your martial art so long that the black belt frays into white once again.

Pat Grant: Somewhere, buried in all my 20-yr stack of SW trivia, is/was an article out of a serious magazine in which a comparison between Oz and SW was diligently undertaken. It appeared before TESB, even.

Matthew Whitney: Don't know about your English prof, but I tend not to see Leia's reactions to her sorrows as masculine. I've known way too many women who do

not fit the current stereotypes, both traditional and feminist, of the female as the naturally more feeling/expressive half of the human race. In fact, among our current group of friends, it's the males (all straight) who are far more expressive of feelings/joys/sorrows. The women are all of the stiff-upper lip school of thought. And I knew lots of women from the older generations who were that way even more so. I'd say it's more of a cultural reaction. My elder female relatives didn't expect anyone over the age of 18 to "get excited" (at least publicly) over Life's curve balls, which may reflect a stoic peasant background; my most reticent friends cite English-born grandfathers and the lessons they learned at an early age about not showing how they truly felt about things. Rather than generalize our cultural expectations of female/male behavior across non-Terran characters, I'd rather interpret Leia's reactions as either personal preference/temperment or as a reflection of one of Alderaan's culture's expectations of women/politicians/Very Active People.

Ah yes, the classic scene where Kong pulls down the top of Faye's dress....

Gerald Crotty: I agree with your thoughts on Jedi humor and Luke having some interests beyond the Jedi world. If anything, for someone who has seen the Dark and survived it, and who deals with so many unfortunate aspects of sentient life, humor will be a release, a saving grace. Although the western religions have divested themselves of the Holy Fool, other religions recognize this aspect of life (I wonder if the one idea went out with the idea of dance as one way of sacred expression?)

Rich Gawel: Welcome to SE! Enjoyed your story about the Yoda filk. Somewhere here, in the piles of old fanzines, I've got one that has Yankovic's contribution on a fannish level. I remember how startled I was when I heard it actually performed. I went back and checked, and sure enough, his name was on the list of contributors.

Louise Turner: Thanks for the encouragement on the Lando stories. Your kind comments (and John's) are very welcome and caused me to open up those files and start thinking again.

All the comments about "Where I First Saw SW" got me wondering if anyone else had ever thought about where they'd be/what they'd be doing today if they *hadn't* gotten involved with SW fandom?

I know my life would be very different. In the late 70s, I had sort of gotten involved with Trek fandom, but slash was coming in big then and I wasn't interested in slash, either storywise or emotionally. Lost a couple of fannish friends over that. And my stories, reflecting my interests, weren't garnering any new contacts. I went to local cons and Trek get togethers, but the local social scene didn't quite click with me. I probably would have

drifted away from fandom altogether.

SW came out the last spring I worked in media, the last year of the young adult life I had established for myself. I was ripe for a Major Change. By the new year, I was on a 6 month health sabbatical; my father was beginning his final year and a half of life; my brother was in major crisis; and my mother was still crazy, but at least the tavern back in Ohio had been sold and she was out here where I could keep an eye on both her and Dad. Two good friends had moved out to Seattle, but the crowd I had run around with for most of my 20s — all my adult life — had moved on or moved out or married and moved away.

Something was going to give and although I'll never know which way I might have steered in a different quantum, I know that without SW, I would not have met Bev Clark, who became a dear and close friend and who introduced me to Susan Matthews, who, for some reason or another, has hung in there with me for nearly 18 years. (There would *never* have been any reason for Susan and me to cross paths save for SW, not with her just out of the military and me a boisterous media chick.) And, without Susan's contacts in fandom, we would never have met Steve Gallacci, who became another dear friend and who ended up marrying Bev.

Without SW, I would not have gone to England in 1979 for SeaCon; there would have been no reason to go to Italy for AllianceCon in 1991. SW gave me the support group I needed when the family disappeared into the next life, the friends who had moved out moved away again in the early 80s, and the job and its overtime became frightful. The friends who stayed, and who are with me still, are the SW friends I made over the last 20 years.

I sometimes wonder, "What if..."

((Ed: My story is much the same, only my "illumination" was due to ST fandom. I grew up in a small, close-knit town and was considered somewhat of an oddball and/or nerd because I still enjoyed ST and science fiction in high school. I was terminally shy and self-conscious as a result of the criticism from family and schoolmates I received, so going to college and into a more open-minded crowd was liberating. But I still felt like the last living ST fan in the world, until one day I ran across a classified ad in Fantasy & Science Fiction magazine which said "Star Trek fan wants to hear from others." I immediately wrote to the address in Michigan and started a correspondence. That lady introduced me to Margaret Basta who introduced me to fanzines. I was enthralled! Never in my life had I seen anything like them! I began writing to every address I could find and that led me to Helen Young in Houston, who had just taken over the Star Trek Welcomittee. I also started a ST fan club in Dallas and wrote to the local newspaper

about it. I got about 40 responses from local people, including Laura Virgil, who it turned out strangely enough, was in one of my college classes! We've been best buds ever since. ST fandom eventually led me to SW fandom and the rest, as they say, is history. What sort of life would I be leading now if I'd never discovered fandom? I expect that I'd be a repressed housewife, probably divorced from a small town cowboy-type who would never understand my interests or longings, miserable, depressed and trying to pinpoint that yearning I kept feeling for "something else.")

I was thinking ... at an equinox get-together last month, we were talking about how 1996 seems to be speeding by, every month getting faster and faster until, by now, people's heads are spinning with their attempts to keep up with the changes. Someone mentioned this to a man who's a major influence in the group and Very Grounded. He blinked and said, well, no, he hadn't noticed that. The speaker described the discussion in a bit more detail, but Chuck still shook his head. The year hadn't affected him that way and he honestly didn't know what we were talking about. That got me musing on the ferry ride back from the island: maybe the Jedi, in their connection with the galactic energies, simply didn't notice the rising chaos. Maybe they were so at ease with the sometimes bumpy ride of Life that they didn't see that it was whirling out of control for others in a major way. Nothing sinister in this, and nothing really "wrong" on their part. Just a different perspective on things. Much the same way an older person doesn't "see" the turmoil an adolescent is going through, at least not in as gut level a way as the younger person does. Maybe the rise of Palpatine was simply an effect of the clash of realities.

Well, this really is short this time! But if I don't get this out tomorrow, I'll miss even the 7-day extension deadline. Sigh! A happy holiday season to everyone; talk with you all again come the new year.

A BRIEFBURST OF RAVING

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October 21, 1996

Hi, everyone...

I know the time for raving about MWC is officially over, but since I couldn't contribute to the last issue of SE

I hope a brief burst of enthusiasm can be tolerated... The days I spent in Lansing were out of this world, and here's a belated thanks to everyone who made me feel at home and turned my first trip to the States into a totally wonderful experience (thanks for the special welcome, Cheree!). And I still haven't read about half of the zines I bought (talk about dragging myself home with the heaviest suitcase ever). I hope I'll be able to finish before next year's MWC, because I certainly want to attend again.

And now I'll be brave and plunge myself headlong into the current discussions, fully aware of the hazard that I'll repeat things which have been brought up a hundred times or more. Yawn at me when you get bored, and I'll know better next time...

Z. P. Florian: Forget about embroidery! If West End won't appreciate a gifted writer, it's their loss. The policy of excluding fan writers altogether is irritating, of course: why not base decisions on quality alone, never mind the writer's background? Someone with paranoid inclinations might read a campaign against fan writing into this, or at least an attempt to stigmatize fan fiction as 'amateur' and worthless. Well, if it were a matter of choosing between pro and fan writing, I'd beg you to stick to the fandom — but, looking at your amazing output of stories and art, you'd certainly manage to prosper in both areas single-handed.

I loved your comments about time being suspended in Lansing: I know the feeling from similar events I've been attending regularly for years, and it always struck me as strange and wonderful that time just doesn't seem to pass in these places.

Veronica Wilson: I enjoyed reading your reflections about the role the Jedi played in the fall of the Old Republic and agree that Palpatine's Purge couldn't have been quite as successful if their position at the time had been beyond dispute. There's the possibility you mentioned: the Jedi might have declined (as an order, or individually), their treatment of 'Dark Siders' could have been perceived as too drastic. Apart from that, I can easily imagine that the Jedi's position and political influence might have generated envy or mistrust among other social groups. At least Ben and Yoda gave me the impression that the Jedi don't readily mix with 'mere mortals' and like to keep their wisdom to themselves (although their behavior can be explained by Palpatine's anti-Jedi policy). If the Jedi of the Old Republic acted like a secret lodge (living by their own rules and drawing on powers not accessible to everyone), doesn't that make them a slightly unpredictable factor in a (basically) democratic state? For these reasons, I've been wondering about the role of the Jedi in the newly emerging state, too. Assuming that Luke organizes a new order, it will still

take him a while. By then, the New Republic would have established its basic structures and institutions: How will politicians integrate the new Jedi (and would they even want to)? I hope you'll find the time to offer additional ideas about that someday.

John Fredericks: I'd never given it any thought before, but I suppose Lando must have been 'slipped in' with the Alliance (as opposed to being formally introduced). His collaboration with Vader would have created suspicions and objections, however contritious Lando's attitude. Additionally, he doesn't stay with the Rebels very long, does he? The entire rescue operation in ROTJ seems to suggest that Luke, Leia, and the rest are acting on their own agenda, and it isn't entirely clear how much of this is known to the Alliance leaders. Did they approve that everyone took a couple weeks off, to rescue a single man whose allegiance was rather temporary?

Marti Schuller: I owe you a letter and a copy of the Luke picture I promised you — and I promise it won't be long now. Please accept my humble apologies...

The resemblance between *Star Wars* and *Lord of the Rings* is really quite striking, even if part of me cringes at the inevitable comparison of Luke and Frodo. Just because they're both short... I don't see Ben as Bilbo though: Bilbo was never that shrewd. I think. Has the parallel between Saruman and Vader been mentioned already? It should be, especially since both are credited with an extremely seductive and powerful voice. And did anyone dare to liken Han to Sam Gamgee? No, I know, Han isn't short.

You sterilized Luke? Well, now I'm scandalized... Would you mind divulging a few details?

The missing ardent kiss of ROTJ: actually (this might lead up to heresy), Han doesn't come across as a very ardent kisser, so to speak. At least I didn't see a great degree of passion in those TESB kisses. Must be those PG restrictions. (But isn't it odd that a tremendous number of spaceships can be blown to shrapnel in front of little kids, while a kiss must not last longer than a second or two?)

Luke's (in)complete training: I guess I'll make this a bit more difficult. Although I can see your point (that 'training' might have to be understood in a more general sense), Yoda's attitude seemed to imply another possibility. To me, his comments sounded more as if he'd accepted that Luke had chosen his own path, and even if his decisions don't quite meet his teachers' original expectations, Yoda trusts in his personal strength. Does this make any sense to you?

Marti and everyone else concerned about the Reformed Solo of ROTJ: No, Han isn't quite himself in ROTJ, and the near-death experience can account for much of the change, no doubt. (I still wish the sandstorm scene hadn't been cut from the finished movie: judging

from the script, that scene would have made Han's changed attitude more plausible.) I wonder if the effect can be permanent though. The Solo of ANH seemed pretty much set in a very different pattern of living... Or is it just me, hoping to see the cynical spacer re-emerge from the persona of the reluctant, slightly dazed general?

A. G. Steyn: Well, yes, the sickbay kiss wasn't ardent either. But there's another instance which rarely ever gets mentioned, at the end of TESB: before returning to the *Falcon's* cockpit, Leia kisses Luke again (on the mouth for all I can see), in an almost casual way. I suppose the issue of incest simply didn't arise because there's no visible erotic tension between them, kissing or no kissing.

The 'drop-dead gorgeous male flesh' of the Empire was probably summoned to Coruscant, to act as Palpatine's live decoration. Someone that ugly must be obsessed with beauty...

Haan vs. Han: Lando started this, and it proved to be contagious! I wouldn't bet my right hand on it, but I don't think Luke ever mixed pronunciations.

Pat Grant: When you say that Kenobi deliberately let himself be 'killed' by Vader to ensure Luke's vengeance, doesn't that imply he also gave Luke a nudge in the wrong direction, i.e. Dark Side? I mean, he would have calculated that the bereaved Luke was going to hate Vader, and hatred — as we all know — is the straight road to Sith hell... I'd never thought of it that way, but assuming Ben's reasoning ran along those lines, his philosophy must have departed from Yoda's in a major way (another reason for Anakin's fall?). Is there any proof in the trilogy at all that Ben's interpretation of Jedi Knighthood and the Dark Side follows Yoda's principles?

Interesting, that quote from the original novelization. On one level, it sounds as if Lucas's ideas about Palpatine's role were still rather sketchy at that point — however, I prefer to think there was a reason why bureaucrats and governors hunted down the Jedi, not Palpatine himself. Perhaps Palpatine originally didn't even intend the extinction of the Jedi but hoped to shape them into a new order according to his own ideas, while 'ordinary', Force-blind politicians and military leaders had become suspicious of the Jedi. And perhaps Palpatine let them go through with persecuting the Jedi, because his own plans to turn them into his tools didn't work out, or — alternatively — because his power wasn't quite as absolute at the time... I look forward to hearing what the rest of you make of that quote!

The idea that aggressive Jedi adepts turn into Sith straight away is appealing, although it makes me wonder about the ensuing chaos. If it happened frequently, wouldn't the Jedi masters necessarily despair of their own abilities and ultimately refrain from training anybody? If every Jedi adept with aggressive tendencies became a

Sith, their numbers must have been impressive.

Here's another thought on the subject: I've been wondering whether the definition of Jedi as passive, defensive in a fight, etc. isn't a reaction to Palpatine's (and Vader's) rise to power rather than the original concept. Ben praises Anakin as a "cunning warrior" after all, and he himself was a General in the Clone Wars (which seems to stretch the definition of passive resistance a little). To take the thought a bit further: perhaps there were different 'schools' of Force-users in the Old Republic, and if so, maybe the strict division between Light/Jedi and Darkness/Sith arose only in a climate of political crisis. Enough speculation... The prequels will probably inform us that things weren't quite as complex.

Matthew Whitney: I've never read the story you asked for, but I'd certainly love to: a 'master sword-maker' sounds like a most intriguing character!

SW/Voyager crossovers: I really like *Voyager*, but I can't quite picture the scenario. Leia and Janeway would probably get along fine as soon as they'd agreed on who's in command, I suppose, and maybe Han could talk a few ex-Maquis into leaving Starfleet again... Other than that, I don't really see potential convergences, but I'd love to hear your (and Tim's) ideas.

Marlene Karkoska: I totally agree with you: Luke in patchwork robes (in a better-not-named novel) makes me shudder, and it seems yet another proof that the pro writers have serious difficulties writing this character. However, I'm not so sure about the other instance you mentioned: Luke's explanation that he's forced to withdraw from the world for a while — lest it drive him insane — made sense to me (about the only idea I liked in this book). Apart from the weight of responsibility, I think being in contact with the Force and a different reality that most people cannot share must create quite an amount of mental strain.

Your comments about Ben made me wonder if he ever considered the consequences of the information he scattered about himself. You're quite right that he set Luke up for a devastating shock when he painted that heroic picture of his father. Did he assume that Vader would never disclose his former identity to his son? Or did he simply overlook the possibility?

Maggie Nowakowska: I hadn't heard that Anakin's supposed to be not much older than Luke in ANH by the end of the prequel-trilogy. It strikes me as a rather odd decision — as if the point were to explain (and diminish) Anakin's fall as a youthful mistake. For me, that would be a real disappointment. I tend to think of Anakin as a brilliant man of almost unlimited curiosity, not a wiz kid who accidentally stumbles into some Dark Side pit...

Marlene, Maggie, Amanda: Your comments made me wonder once again about the exact moment Vader

discovered he had children. Like you, I've always thought that he didn't know about a daughter before ROTJ, but in Luke's case, the trilogy leaves the question entirely unanswered (yet another occasion for high flights of speculation...). Vader could have found out about Luke's existence any time between ANH and TESB, of course, but just for the fun of it, how about this: Vader knew about his son's whereabouts all along, but didn't want to be bothered with bringing up a child, because Luke didn't seem to have any Force potential. Which would also explain why he sensed the Force, not the kinship first, during the Death Star attack. I'll readily admit that this is far-fetched, but on the other hand I've always found it hard to imagine that someone as strong in the Force as Vader could identify somebody else's Force aura and at the same time fail to recognize the familial tie. Unless he didn't expect this particular person to show any Force talent... In Yoda's opinion, Luke is "too old" to begin the Jedi training: Doesn't that imply that he should have displayed 'supernatural' abilities or inclinations at an earlier age, back on Tatooine? Yet ANH gives no hint that this was the case (Beru's line "there's too much of his father in him" indicates only a general restlessness and love of adventure), and Luke himself doesn't stir with recognition when Ben begins to explain about the Force. I wonder if Luke's abilities have been deliberately blocked at a very early age, for the sake of his security, and to ensure his father's disinterest. Under those circumstances, Luke could have freely used the name 'Skywalker', too. All highly hypothetical, I know...

Amanda Palumbo: On the subject of Luke's growth: I couldn't agree more — his stunning development (the major reason this character fascinates me) is overlooked too often. For better or worse, Luke is the character who changes the most in the course of the trilogy. However, I don't quite see his development as a straight path to perfection, rather it includes failure and misjudgments in several instances (the training sequence in TESB is also a sequence of failures), but that's what adds a realistic touch. Without the mistakes, the temptation, the doubts, Luke's story couldn't possibly move anyone. Well, at least it wouldn't have moved me...

M. J. Mink: Maybe Luke isn't the emotionally clinging type, but how about emotionally demanding? When he reproaches Han for deserting the Rebellion in ANH, or demands that his father renounce a life of decades in ROTJ, doesn't that demonstrate that he asks a lot of people he cares about? His cause may be just, but there's a very personal element in both situations.

Good point that the aggressive significance of using the Force is apparently more widely known than the religious or philosophical aspect. Again, that makes me wonder if Yoda's description of Jedi Knighthood is as universally

Hey, have mercy on Han...! :) Maybe the torture on Bespin did affect him in unfavorable ways, but there's no reason to think the damage is permanent.

Gerald Crotty: I have the same problem with CGI — real models always look much more convincing to me (and so did the original Jabba, for a fact — compared to the digital Hutt in the photo). Maybe it's a matter of getting used to another category of FX technology, but having been raised on model tricks and the like, I obviously have an adjustment problem.

Everyone who wondered about Anakin, Jr.: I'll agree that Leia has various reasons not to want her child named Anakin, and Anakin Skywalker was a non-entity in her life anyway. About Han, I'm not so sure. If one assumes that Han has a strong sense of dynasty or harbors superstitions, then I guess he'd oppose that choice of name. Personally, I wouldn't credit him with either. He was introduced a loner with no familial ties (and why else would he call himself Solo?), and although superstitions might be popular among spacers, Han seems the more down-to-earth type, with a tolerant, generous personality. All of which leads me to think that he wouldn't consider the name Anakin an ill omen (they're not calling the baby 'Darth', after all), he'd probably make his decision on the grounds of personal taste alone. I can see that Luke might feel strongly about this, and maybe that could sway Han's mind, too.

Everyone concerned about Luke (not) getting a family: The question never quite occurred to me, because the end of ROTJ seemed to emphasize his loneliness so much. Luke's experience sets him apart from the community, and I appreciated that as an honest touch to an overall happy ending: Luke has come through a lot, achieved a lot, but — let's face it — there's a price to be paid for such things (otherwise, we'd be looking at cardboard characters, not real people). In his case, the price is probably a measure of loneliness: how could he possibly even explain what he's been through, let alone share those extremely jarring experiences? By the end of ROTJ, it feels as if he carries an ultimate silence with him. Maybe Han and Leia who were close to Luke before and watched him grow and change will find a way of understanding, but for someone new, it's bound to get extremely difficult. (Even for another Jedi, since Luke's path is so unique.) While that doesn't mean he couldn't have a lover (although I think true intimacy and trust will never come easy), I have difficulties picturing him settled with a family. Also, Luke's feelings about having children of his own must by necessity be very mixed.

Well, there's a lot more I'd love to talk about — maybe next time. I look forward to reading you all in SE 46...

ON TO MARS

Catherine Churko
590 Ft. Washington Avenue #1M
New York, NY 10033

Hi, everyone. From reading #45, I wasn't the only one absent from SE for unpleasant reasons. Better times ahead for us all, I hope.

Soon, next step for me will be full time rehab. Ups my tolerance for longer hours and 5 days under someone else's schedule of activities. I've been able to do most of my previous errands and recreations again. Now, I have to reroute them around the new schedule (mimicing what I've done previously around work).

I sure made up for last spring and summer's inability to do much of anything. Went to all my favorite gardens around the city, the Bronx Zoo, the beach, art museums, dining out, and time on the Library's Web access. While we in the NE didn't have the super-scorchers of the past 3 summers, I handled sustained averages of 85° with and without humidity well. (This was a major fear.) Recovery continues.

Cheree, your home looks lovely. May you all enjoy decades of a good life there.

Speaking of life ... on to Mars! Let's go get those rock analyzers, scoopers up there! Astronauts, too! Machines are very helpful but I want the poetry of the experience through human eyes/senses.

Other Realms: Oh, finally, we Statesiders will catch up to you Brits (hi!) after twisting in the wind for 12 weeks, while you saw the last five episodes of *Babylon 5*. Since I rarely even skim over pages in a novel, I avoided most hints, info on them (as tempting as it was).

Two weeks ago, I had a Media SF Day on the Web. Besides B5, I found my first fansite for *Alien Nation* (yea!), and *V* (wow!). While I still have big quibbles with certain character interactions (*V*), after an 11 year absence, it's great to see it again. With *Alien Nation*, we get reruns and new movies, as we get reruns with most SF series. But *V* went down a blackhole. Since I have enough fan activity/contact already in SW, the Web is an interesting curiosity. But with no contact to AN, B5 or *V* fandom, the Web is a gift.

On to LoCs, etc.: Thanks for the reprint of tele-etiquette. Enjoyed the MWC review and photos — the carbonite Han was wild (any tech notes on it?). Doll revue was fun, as always. Congrats to all award winners and honorees. I loved Nancy's masthead illo and end page cartoon.

Z. P. re Frayser: I remember going to my first MWC ('87) and being shocked that anyone took the Empire's

side. Personally, I still find it ... disagreeable — but we can agree to disagree. I'm glad folks are getting along well.

Veronica: Very interesting, enjoyable presentation.

John: One of my favorite SF sub-genres are stories of future archaeologists, etc., making awful gaffs in extrapolation of our lives, objects based on their lives, etc.

Pat: Hi. Know you a little through Wanda and Arwen. Hope you are recovering smoothly and experienced major relief from your difficulties. Re to A.G.: 25 year+ fandoms. Amen. Sports and cars are probably the few socially sanctioned non-work/recreational pursuits you "can" be publicly passionate about ... music, too, to a certain degree.

Maggie: Another "odd woman out" here, re: another possible interpretation of OWK's giving Luke "dad's" lightsaber, agreeing with at least the possibility of it.

Treena: Welcome back. :)

Tim: I heard a little about "Good Omens" somewhere, but you really make it sound really fully/interesting. Will try to catch it somewhere.

Re: Only Hope. True — never obviously stated. That was probably in my mind re: my Yoda future glimpses comments in #39.

Gerald: We *have* suffered enough! I do though tend to agree with Maggie's take on GL's action re: the redo's. I like your wish list, too.

Liz: Enjoyed your report on Visions and Mr. Prowse and Mr. Mayhew and the DB's gleeful adventures.

Who knows when I'll get back to MWC (I have a currently more modest goal re cons in the works). But if I *could*, no, I wouldn't want to have a separate smaller SW-only con the same weekend as MWC. First, as an artist/artisan, I want to see art and costumes in most fandoms. And re: my lack of official fandom connects on B5, AN and V — MWC is one place to try and find like-minded fen (and fanzines, stuff, etc.).

Rich: Welcome. I basically said what you said at the top of your LoC, back in '87 when SW fandom was about 10 years up and running (gee, and I thought I was getting in at near end — but that's because the lean years almost were on us then).

When I was a kid, a bunch of cousins and I would round-robin stories — oh, a few paragraphs each, on our uncle's portable 5" reel-to-reel tape recorder. We had a hoot of a time.

Louise: Glad you made it to MWC and that you and Catriona are in touch again.

Amanda: Hope your mother-in-law is still defying the odds. Good luck on your move.

May we all have a good autumn (and gentle winter). Until next time, MTFBWY.

TOP TEN REASONS WHY THE STAR WARS CHARACTERS WOULD KICK BUTT IN THE STAR TREK UNIVERSE

10 In the *Star Wars* universe, weapons rarely, if ever, set on "stun."

9 The *Enterprise* needs a huge engine room with an anti-matter unit and a crew of twenty just to go into warp—the *Millennium Falcon* does the same thing with R2-D2 and a Wookiee.

8 After resisting the Imperial torture droid and Darth Vader, Princess Leia still looked fresh and desirable—after pithy Cardassian starvation torture, Picard looked like hell.

7 One word: lightsabers.

6 Darth Vader could choke the entire Borg empire with one glance.

5 The Death Star doesn't care if a world is class "M" or not.

4 Luke Skywalker not obsessed with sleeping with every alien he encounters.

3 Jabba the Hutt would eat Harry Mudd for trying to cut in on his action.

2 The Federation would have to attempt to liberate any ship named *Slave I*.

1 Picard pilots *Enterprise* through asteroid belt at one-quarter impulse power. Han Solo floors it.



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A TREMOR IN THE FORCE #10. Yep, I've decided to do at least one more issue of TF. Since this will be the 10th issue, I want it to be an extra special one. I want the best of the best for this one. I already have a new installment of *Penumbra* from Catriona Campbell as well as two new stories from Marti Schuller. Stories promised are a sequel to "Balance of Power" by Veronica Wilson and a new novelette by Z. P. Florian. Nancy Stasulis has a wonderful color anniversary grouping in the works for the cover. A special feature I'd like to have is a color portfolio from SW fandom's best artists. There are sure to be even more surprises. If you're a newer writer or artist, however, don't let this intimidate you. I'd still love to see what you have.

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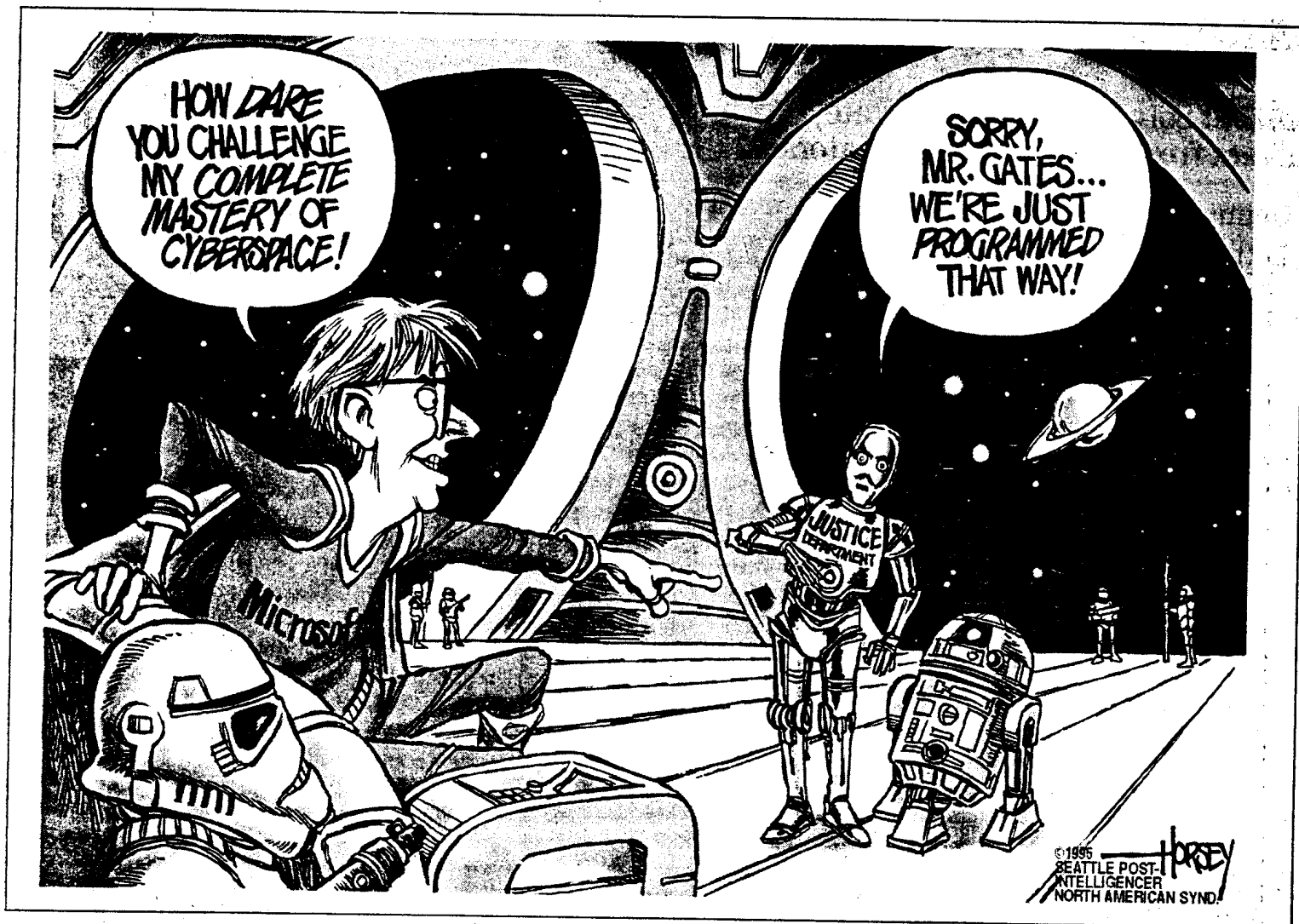
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